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OLIVER CROMWELL;

A STORY OF

THE CIVIL WAR.

BY

CHARLES EDWARD STEWART.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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OLIVER CROMWELL,

A STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPLANATION.

RACHEL was sitting in her own private room, embroidering a scarf, such as that worn by the Cavalier gentlemen over their armour. The work did not progress very rapidly; and ever and anon she would cease from it and, sighing deeply, appear plunged in thought. A little distance from her sat Margery, also plying her needle, but at some

more homely work ; and as her young mistress's countenance changed from the look of earnest occupation to that of listless sadness, she silently watched her, wondering what grief could make one so gentle, so lovely, so loveable, and apparently so loved by every one, so sad. They had thus gone on some time in silence : at length Rachel spoke.

"Dost thou love thy tall Serjeant very much, Margery?"

Margery looked up with an air of some surprise.

"Surely, madam," she replied : "he hath ever been true and kind to me ; he hath saved me from worse than death. I should be no true woman if I did not love him."

"How camest thou to know him, Margery ? I would fain hear the history of his courtship."

"He lodged in our house, madam, when the town of Reading was besieged ; but I loved him not then, though he loved me from the beginning."

"Didst thou not have a young Cavalier, wounded, in thy house, Margery, while that siege went on?"

"Truly, madam," replied Margery, with a slight blush, which did not escape Rachel, "we had; Captain Willingham, the son of Sir John: and a noble young gentleman he is."

"Didst thou tend him in his sickness, dear Margery?"

"I did, madam."

Rachel sighed; and a momentary pang of jealousy shot through her at the thought of any but herself tending Hubert.

"They say he was light of conduct, Margery."

"Who saith so," replied the young girl, "cannot know him. I believe it not. He is the very soul of honour."

"Thou speakest warmly in his praise, Margery: but I have heard he did take away a maiden from her home shamelessly to the camp."

"Who," asked Margery, "hath said that of him?"

"Not one whose truth can be much relied upon, certainly," answered her mistress: "the story came first through Captain Slasher."

"Captain Slasher!" replied Margery; "and wilt thou, dear lady, believe aught that such a man could say of one whom thou hast known from childhood?"

Rachel felt the rebuke, and coloured; but she replied,

"Nay, Margery, the Captain said he had *seen* Hubert carry the damsel off before his very eyes, on the ramparts of Reading."

The truth now flashed across Margery's mind; she rose from her seat, and with heightened colour and glowing eyes,

"The villain!" she exclaimed; "the false villain! so to wrong a noble gentleman, and an innocent girl. It was *I*, madam: it was I myself whom Captain Slasher saw on the ramparts of Reading; and God knows Cap-

tain Willingham was dealing with me in all honour."

"Thou, Margery! was it thee, then, that Hubert did take into the camp? Surely there is some mystery here! Tell me the story: what *thou* sayest I will believe."

Margery then told her the whole story of her guiding Hubert to escape, and of Captain Slasher's interference; and how Hubert was forced to take her into the town, and of her return to her father.

Rachel uttered not a word while she spoke; but, when she had done, she went up to her, and kissed her forehead.

"Margery," she said, "thou hast taken a load from my heart. It was cruel pain to believe that the companion of my childhood, whom I love as a brother (Margery smiled at the mention of brotherly love), should be unworthy. I see that I did him wrong even to doubt, on the word of such a man as Slasher. But tell me, Margery, dost thou, indeed, truly love Elijah? hast he thy *whole* heart?"

"Indeed, and indeed," replied Margery; "I love him with all my heart. I say not, dear mistress, that I have always loved him. But now," she added, with some dignity, "I am his betrothed wife; every thought is his: and he deserves all the love that I can give him."

Rachel guessed the truth, but she was satisfied: the young maiden's avowal of affection for her betrothed husband was too simple—too unmistakeably sincere, to leave a cloud even on the mind of Rachel; who, now that the torment of having doubted her lover was removed, began to torment herself with self-reproach that she ever should have doubted him. Thus it is that man never can—never will allow himself be happy. Let him be afflicted by the acts of God or of man, and he is tormented by those acts; let his suffering be removed, and he turns his mind inward, and torments *himself*, for something that he has done, or has not done.

.

While they were yet talking, the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard in the courtyard; and in another moment the door of the apartment opened, and Rachel was in her father's arms.

"My dear, dear father; how glad I am that thou art come at last! But," she added, looking fondly in his face, and scanning every feature, "you are thin and careworn, and look sad and grave. What has happened to work this change?"

"Alas, my child! I ever come as a har-binger of evil to thee. Exile, I fear, must again be our lot."

"Exile, my dear father! and wherefore? Thou, of the most distinguished of the army that now rules the land! thou of the most valued of the Lord General's officers!"

"Such I was, Rachel, such I am no more. Even here, in thy solitude, thou must have heard of the sad turn that the public affairs are taking. Thou must have heard that the Parliament has been trampled upon, and

that the army will have the King's life. They call it his trial: but a king passeth not from a prison save to death; and when they talk of the King's trial, they mean his death."

"Surely, my father, Cromwell will not permit it: I have heard thee say he was not cruel. Surely *he* will protect the King's life."

"Thou hast heard me say, and truly, that he is not cruel; and he hath essayed to save the King's life. Even through me hath he tried to induce the King to escape this country; and nought else could save him. But the King, alas! would not believe his cause so hopeless as it was, and he rejected the counsel and the opportunity: and now Cromwell *cannot* protect him. It is too late: the General hath taken his part, and is of the most active in forwarding the King's trial."

"I understand, my father; and thou — thou wilt not take part in it?"

"No, Rachel, no! I drew the sword for

the liberty of my country, and God knows I have fought for the cause with all my heart and with all my strength: but I cannot consent to embrue my hands in the blood of the King. Misguided he has been; tyrannical, under bad advice, he may have been: but still he is the *King*, and I have been bred to think the King a part of the Constitution of my country. I am called a lukewarm patriot; I am told that while Charles lives there can be no peace in England; I am told that only by this sacrifice can another civil war be prevented. Let it be so. If God wills it, it must be so; but *I* can be no part in the tragedy. I have seen death often enough on the field; I have slain men, and have been many a time and oft near death myself: and I have seen these things with unflinching nerves—without a shudder, or a misgiving; but I have not the courage to do this thing that is asked of me. And I have so told the Lord General.”

"Art thou, then, no longer of his council and officers?"

"No, dear Rachel, I am not. While I could approve of the Lord General's course, I served him faithfully: when I ceased to do so, it became not the honour of Francis Frankland to serve longer. I have yielded up my commission and am again a wanderer."

"But Cromwell is not thy enemy, dear father? he was not wont to be revengeful."

"He is not my *enemy*, Rachel; but he is no longer my *friend*: and, alas! I have many enemies, who wait but the withdrawal of the Lord General's favour to call me recreant and hunt me to death; if not from mere hatred of me, for the love of my estate."

"What, my father, are these men base enough so to turn upon a comrade?"

Frankland smiled at his daughter's simplicity.

"Truly," he said, "thou knowest not

men; and still less dost thou know men banded together for civil war. No war is made without coarse instruments; and civil war, alas! like the boiling of the cauldron, stirreth up much that is base to the surface. There be gentlemen and honest men in our army; but, alas! there be many that fight for their own hand and for plunder; and, so they get the plunder, they care little whether it be from friend or foe. Thou must not be marvellously astonished if thou dost hear, ere long, of thy father being marked and treated as a malignant. Oh! my child, my child!" he pursued passionately, "I have thought of thee, ere I took this part, till my brain ached with doubt and agony, for I felt that I was condemning thee to exile, perhaps to want: but I could not, even for thee, forget my conscience. Dost thou forgive me thy ruin, Rachel?"

Rachel flung her arms round his neck, and, kissing his brow again and again, replied,

“My father, better poverty than dishonour; better a whole conscience than riches poisoned with remorse. Thou hast done right, and God will protect us: dost not thou believe that my mother would have wished thee so to act?”

“She would, my child; would, but for thy sake, I were with her. But come,” he added, “though I know not what may be my fate, I am yet safe, and may abide here for a time at least; that is, if Willingham will harbour a cast-off Roundhead: let us seek him and see.”

Sir John was, it need hardly be said, delighted to see his old friend; but when he heard that he had, what we should call, *cut* the Roundheads, his delight knew no bounds; and for a while he could not help forgetting himself by abusing the Colonel's party to his face.

“God a' mercy!” he cried out, “I ever said thou wast too good for those rascally Roundheads: I knew thou couldst not keep

pace with their wicked and bloody ways. Welcome back among honest men, Francis Frankland; I can almost forgive thee for fighting against the King."

The Colonel let him exhaust his joy, and then gravely said,

"My old friend, let us henceforth, so far as may be, touch this subject no more. What I have done, I have done in all honesty and sincerity: that I have stopped, is not because I believe my cause was in the beginning wrong. I am still against the King, as I ever was; but I am not against his life: I would have given mine to obtain the liberty of the country, if it might be; but not at the price of destroying the King and the Constitution. I have left my party, but I am not against them: I am not of thine. Let us henceforth be only old friends, and let these unhappy party strifes be no more mentioned between us."

"Well, well," said the Knight, "I will

not abuse thy party or thy General, if I can help it; but, as I live, I must say—and I will say—I am right glad thou hast parted company with them. Yet, one word before we drop this subject: the *people*, Frankland, the people, what say they? surely they do not call for this unheard-of cruelty.”

“The people,” replied the Colonel, “if by that you mean the populace, I believe like it not. When first these troubles began, they were warm with us; but their English hearts are ever with the losing side, and now they pity the King, and would save him if they could: if he came back, they would again be against him. But they *cannot* save him: there is now but one power in the State—the sword; and that is drawn against the King’s life. Oh, England! oh, my country!” he pursued, plunged in his own painful thoughts as in a sort of soliloquy, “where will this strife end? Could we have foreseen the blindness of this King; could we have fore-

seen all the violence that would be aroused; better, better far had it been to have borne the evils that we had than to have plunged into this whirlpool. The King must die! there is no help for it; and then? All is convulsion, all is chaos! the nobles and gentlemen are broken and shut up in their castles; the people are mad with unbridled license! What power can restore order but a dictatorship? I see no other fate for England. And liberty—the liberty that we have fought for—when will it come? Not in this generation shall we see it: not till this agony of the nation hath passed away; not till years, perhaps, of a despotism stronger than that which we have destroyed! But it will come”—he continued, with kindling eye, and stretching forth his arm as though he saw some vision in the distance—“it will come at last: God will not let all this blood be shed in vain. Out of this disorder will grow order; first a tyranny, and then a renewal of liberty; and, when the people

shall have felt the agonies of anarchy, and the pressure of the despotism that can alone quell it, then will they reunite, and form, out of the shattered elements of the Constitution, a new and a more glorious one, under which England shall flourish, and be again greater and happier than before."

He ceased, and, exhausted with his agitation, sat down and covered his face with his hands; while his friend and his daughter, awed by the almost prophetic tone in which he had spoken, stood silently awaiting his recovery of calm.

CHAPTER II.

SECRET SERVICE.

"HURRAH, my boys, hurrah! strife and bloodshed! a bloody war and a sickly season, as we used to say on the main!" thus spoke the president of a club, enjoying their saturnalia in the private room of the "Three Kings." And, as he spoke, he and the company rose and drained to the bottom their cups of canary, and yelled forth in chorus, "A bloody war and a sickly season! hurrah! hurrah!"

"And so, Captain," said one of the company, "thou hast quitted the army?"

"Aye, by God!" said the president; "I was beaten by odds in a damned rat-hole of a castle, where they had sent me to guard an old fellow and his daughter, or ward—damn me, if I recollect which!—and so the Colonel gave me some sharp words, and I, as you may well suppose, gentlemen, could not stand it; I put my hand on the hilt of my sword, and then they talked of a court-martial, and I bolted: and that's how I left the army; and I wasn't very sorry for it, neither. Hard work, plenty of long marches, damned short dinners, and no pay!—at least, we seldom saw the rhino. By God! loyalty's a very good thing, and "his blessed Majesty" is a fine word, and all that; but a man can't quaff his cup of sack upon words: not even our friend Zerubbabel here could stand that, saint though he be."

"Truly, friend," said the individual thus addressed, taking a huge pull at a tankard

of mighty ale, "there be few who look with more disgust on the vanities of the world than I do. What are they but dross? A few years, and the vile body perisheth, and is dust; yet while it pleaseth the Lord we should live: the body must be cared for."

"Pity, Zerubbabel," said one of the company, "thou dost not start as a preacher: thou hast a marvellous twang of doctrine."

"Nay, Stephen, scoff not at our brother," interposed the president; "he will beat thee at the wine pot, I warrant, as well as in preaching."

"I have my gifts," returned Zerubbabel, "and the Lord hath blessed me with a strong head. Wherefore, beloved, pass round the sack; for what saith the Scripture? Eat we and drink we, for to-morrow we die."

"And what of the King's trial," asked a third; "hast thou heard aught of it, Captain?"

"Nay," replied the Captain, "the godly are minded that he should die; and so die he

will, I suppose. Thou and I cannot save him if we would: and I doubt thou wouldst not stir a finger to save him, or any other man, an' thou wast not paid for it."

"How, sir," rejoined the other, "do you impeach my honour? Odds fish! as the young Prince saith, but I will not suffer my honour to be touched by any man."

"Mind thy wine-cup, man," replied the president, "lest Zerubbabel there swallow it as well as his own; and let be thine honour: we are all men of honour here, and a joke must pass as such."

"Bravo, Captain!" shouted the rest, already half drunk: "give it him well! we want no brawling here. Let us have a song instead."

"Ay, a song! a song! let the president call for a song."

"Well, then," said the president, "I call upon Zerubbabel: only don't let it be too sanctified, beloved."

Zerubbabel thus called upon, turned up

the whites of his eyes, as though he were going to preach, and then, in a coarse rough voice, and with a mixture of rollicking joviality and savage gravity, trolled forth the following lay:

"What care we for Roundheads or King,
Let them fight till they mangle each other;
The dice and the wine-pot's the thing,
All else is but glamour and bother.
Hurrah, then, for havoc and death!
Hurrah, for both Cromwell and King!
What care we which stops t'other's breath?
So we can drink, gamble, and sing.

"Let Liberty fight against Crown,
And let us live by other men's folly;
What care we? whichever is down,
We can gamble and drink and be jolly.
Hurrah, then, for havoc and blood!
Hurrah, for destruction and trouble!
The dead do not want wine or food,
And we who survive will drink double."

"Bravo! bravo!" chorussed the whole company.

"Well done, Zerubbabel," cried the Captain; "none can match thee, of a surety,

for a sentimental ditty: I warrant thou didst not sing such gaillards as that when thou didst serve Master Cromwell?"

"Nay, truly," replied Zerubbabel, "his Generalship loved not mirth nor frolicsome gaiety; though he could make a rough joke now and then, just to ease off the superabundance of sanctity."

The company that were thus amusing themselves, not with the feast of reason, but with the flow of sack and ribaldry, consisted of a heterogeneous mass, such as is to be found generally flourishing during civil commotions: discarded officers and soldiers, broken clerks and tradesmen, debauched and disgraced churchmen, and blackguards and demireps of all kinds, living upon the misery and plunder of others, and brought together by the common attraction of gaming, wine, and fierce and reckless jollity. Among such men were the tools for the dirty work of both parties to be sought and found; and among those present at this orgy were

men, some in the pay of the King, some of Cromwell, and some in the pay of both and betraying both.

"Friend Slasher," said Zerubbabel to the president, when the members of the meeting, having drunk as much as they could pay for, had broken up and were departing, "dost thou much affect the service of the man whom ye call King?"

"Verily, beloved," replied Slasher, imitating his nasal drawl, "have I not told thee that in it we get hard knocks and small pay: art thou answered?"

"Of a surety, yea," replied his companion; "and thou wouldst like service where there are fewer knocks and better pay: is it not so?"

"Even so: if thou canst help me to such, I will say thou art a good fellow."

"The Lord General giveth good pay, friend Slasher."

"Aye, but he expecteth men to take hard knocks too, and plenty of them."

"Nay, there be services which he wanteth

ever and anon, where knocks be few and pay plenty."

"By God ! if there is such service," replied Slasher, "that 's the service for me."

"But thy *conscience*, friend Slasher ; is it tender ? Canst thou abide to serve the Roundhead General, when thou has served under his blessed Majesty ?"

"My conscience be damned !" retorted Slasher. "The King had no conscience for me when he sent me on a fool's errand, to get my throat cut by a cursed Roundhead ; and mine won't trouble me much if my cup is full and my pouch heavy."

"Come, then, with me, and I will take thee to the Lord General ; methinks thou art a man that he can find employment for : but thou wilt not be nice, or stand upon punctilios, of thy being a gentleman and the like ?"

"Hungry dogs must eat dirty pudding,"*

* I believe this elegant proverb is of more modern date, but such an anachronism is pardonable.

friend Zerubbabel, "and till I have gotten more pudding than I want, I shall not be very nice how I get it."

"Thou art the man, then," said Zerubbabel, "get thee with me to the General's quarters."

CHAPTER III.

THE ROYAL PRISONER.

CHARLES was no longer at Carisbrook: he had been, as is well known, during the latter part of the year 1647, a sort of prisoner on parole in the castle. He was required to pléde his word that he would not leave the Island; but, having done so, he was left at liberty by the Governor to go much where he liked, in it; nor was he prevented from negotiating with the Parliamentary Commissioners whom he met at Newport: but these negotiations failing, he

had been seized by a detachment of soldiers, and conveyed to Hurst Castle, a few days before the elimination of the House of Commons by Colonel Pride.

Hurst Castle is a melancholy looking place, even from the outside. Standing on the very end of a long slip of land running out from near Yarmouth, to a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile in the sea, it looks isolated, as it were, from the whole world—an outcast buried in the sea. The inside is not much more inviting; the rooms are small, dark, dismal; haunted by the moaning of the sea and the screaming of the sea-birds, and with nothing to enliven those who may chance to be inmates of them, but the passing to and fro of shipping—if indeed that can be called an enlivening sight, which only darkens, by the contrast of its life and motion, the stagnant solitude of the castle. At high water the whole neck of land, on the extremity of which it stands, is buried, and the castle

stands a speck in the ocean—a grim little island cut off from all apparent communication with the world.

Those who have visited the dungeon of Chillon, and, clambering up from its floor to the high and narrow windows imbedded in its thick walls, have looked out upon the waters of the lake flowing high above the floor of the dungeon, and have then turned back from the glimpse of external light and brightness, to the gloom of the seven-pillared prison of Bonnivart, may form some conception of the dismal gloom of the apartment in Hurst Castle, which was, for a short time, the dwelling-place of the King of England. It was a small room, low-roofed, not fourteen feet square, and so dark that, during the daytime even (it was in mid-winter it will be recollected), the King could not see to read or write without candles.

In this gloomy prison, with little to divert him from his painful thoughts, except walking, at low water, on the slip of land that

connects the castle with the main land, and watching the shipping as it passed to and fro, was the King's life passed for nearly a month. His faithful Hubert was alone allowed to attend him: a melancholy service for a young man scarcely in his prime, and with his heart racked by his own anxieties about his father and Rachel; of whose position he had not heard for months.

The King's anxieties were increased by the report which had reached him that it was the intention of the ruling powers to put him quietly out of the way—in other words, to assassinate him: and when, in the middle of the night, towards the end of December, after the King had retired to rest, the rattle of the chains of the draw-bridge fell upon his ear, and the clatter of horses was heard in the courtyard, Charles, full of alarm, sent Hubert to inquire who had arrived.

Hubert returned with the announcement that it was Major Harrison, with a body

of horse. He had scarcely had time to communicate this intelligence—which redoubled the King's fears, inasmuch as Harrison was one of the persons who had been named as threatening his life—when the door opened, and Harrison himself entered.

The figure of Harrison was tall and spare, his complexion and expression dark and sinister, and his eyes had the fierce glow of religious enthusiasm, verging on insanity. He stood for an instant, fixing his eyes on the King, and was about to speak; but Charles, now that death, so much dreaded in the distance, was, as he believed, upon him, recovered at once his composure and dignity.

He rose not from his seat, but slightly bowing his head, addressed his unwelcome visitor :

“Well, sir; from whom and what are your despatches, Major Harrison?”

“Sir,” replied the Major, “I am commissioned by the Parliament to conduct you to Windsor.”

The King fixed his eyes stedfastly on the Major's; he read there the heat of fanatical animosity, but not the skulking look of the assassin. Harrison looked as he was, a bold soldier and a hot zealot; but there was something chivalrous about his bearing, which repelled the idea of his undertaking the base duty of an assassin.

"Are those *all* your orders, Major?" asked the King; "or are other acts to follow?"

"I am to conduct you to Windsor, sir," replied Harrison. "What other acts are to follow it is not my duty to announce."

"Surely thou art not to kill me, Harrison?" asked the King, with some agitation.

"Sir," replied the officer, drawing himself up with hauteur, "the Lord General is not a murderer, to take men's lives in cold blood, and by stealth: but had he been, it is not to me that he would have given such a commission."

"It is well," said Charles. "I did not

think your countenance betokened the willing instrument of such an office. But thy General will take my life : I doubt him."

"Sir," replied Harrison, gravely, "I know not what is the fate reserved for you. This only can I say, that the law is the same for great and small : justice hath no respect of persons. Your Majesty will be pleased to hasten your departure."

A slight frown crossed the King's brow at hearing himself thus addressed in the tone and language of command ; but he restrained all other outward signs of displeasure, replying,

"Any place rather than this dungeon. I and my attendant, Captain Willingham, will prepare to accompany you, sir : till then, I bid you farewell." And bowing with a mixture of grace and hauteur, he rose. Harrison, overawed despite himself by the King's manner, withdrew respectfully.

"Hubert," said the King, "all is lost. These men will take me to Windsor, and

thence to the scaffold. It is over! God's will be done!"

"Nay, sir," replied the young man, "let us hope yet. Surely the people will not suffer it: they will rise and rescue your Majesty from the hands of these cruel men."

"The people, my young friend! Alas! they will weep at the sight of their King brought forth to die; but they will not stir a finger to save him. Alas, poor people! what *can* they do? They are not armed; London is full of Cromwell's soldiers; and the King has not a regiment that he can call his own. Hubert," he continued, "God is my witness, I have loved my people, and am willing to die for them: when they have killed their King, and are governed by the iron hand of Cromwell, they will remember Charles Stewart with tears, and will be sorry for what they have done. But the reign of my fated house is ended. Henceforth I think no more of crown or life: henceforth I prepare me for the next world.

Alas! the Queen—my children! what will be their fate?"

He folded his hands and bent his head as if in prayer, and Hubert, respecting his Royal master's grief, disturbed him not. What, indeed, could he have said to comfort the Royal mourner? His own hopes were at an end: he had long seen that the King's friends were too weak, or too lukewarm, to give him the help of aught but their sympathy; and, young as he was, he knew that it is not sympathy, but guns and broadswords, that decide the fate of monarchs, when their own subjects are in arms against them: a brace of eighteen pounders and a few hundred weight of powder are, in such cases, worth oceans of tears and sighs. Poor Charles had the tears and sighs, but the eighteen pounders and the gunpowder were on Cromwell's side.

CHAPTER IV.

SLASHER PROMOTED.

ZERUBBABEL conducted the *ci-devant* Captain Slasher from the City down through Temple Bar, and what we now call the Strand, till he came to Whitehall. There they found the palace guarded by a strong body of military, who suffered nobody to pass within the precincts without giving the password. But Zerubbabel was one of those who seemed to possess it, and, besides, appeared to be known to the soldiery; many of whom recognised him by a nod,

in which there was a curious mixture of contempt and respect. In, however, he passed with his new friend, till they came to a small low building, flanking one side of the courtyard; and, there turning in, he entered a room not much bigger, and about of the same quality, in furniture and appearance, as a modern police station. It was in fact the guard-room of a portion of the guard. In it were two persons: one, a strong stoutly-built man, about forty-five, in plain clothes; the other, a non-commissioned officer of cavalry. The first was engaged writing, and did not lift his eyes immediately on the entrance of Zerubbabel. When he did, he merely gave him a passing look; and then, turning his large eyes full on Slasher, surveyed him with a strong, keen, fixed gaze, that made Slasher feel as if he was being read through and through, and turned inside out.

The result of the survey did not appear to be very satisfactory to the gentleman;

for, turning from Slasher with a slight frown, he addressed the soldier, saying,

“Depart, Elijah, and wait without.”

When the soldier had left the room, he again spoke, addressing Zerubbabel:

“Thou hast come to time,” he said; “right. I have work for thee: but who is this, and wherefore cometh he?”

“My Lord General,” replied Zerubbabel, with a deep obeisance, “thou didst desire me to find a man for secret service: I have brought thee one.”

“Ha!” ejaculated Cromwell. Then turning to Slasher, he said abruptly, “Withdraw, sir, till we send for thee.” And the astonished Captain withdrew. “Now, Zerubbabel,” continued Cromwell, “what knowest thou of him? Is he safe?”

“My Lord, he *was* in the King’s army; he has been turned out of it with disgrace for the basest treachery; he is poor and hath no bread; he is disgraced and hates the King.”

Cromwell smiled. "An' thou art sure of thy facts, Zerubbabel? They are a warrant of his faithfulness to me—for a time at least—better than a thousand characters."

"I am sure of my facts, my Lord. His name is Slasher."

"The Slasher that gave up Willingham?"

"The same, my Lord."

"He is a base hound," said Cromwell: "had I a trooper in my army who had done the like, I would have hung him on the next tree. But he will serve well against his master, so he be not called upon to fight. Go thou, Zerubbabel, and wait for me, and send in this Slasher."

Slasher accordingly came in, intending to look somewhat ruffled at being so summarily sent out and brought back, by one whom he had been accustomed to think of as a vile Roundhead—a sort of vulgar scum. But when he looked up, and met the broad, fixed, penetrating glance of the lion-looking

man before him, his spirit sunk within him; and, meek as a lamb waiting to be devoured, he stood silent, till the man, whose mastery he instinctively felt, should speak.

"Thou wouldst take service with me, friend?" said Cromwell.

"Truly, sir, I am willing to do so."

"Listen to me, then," said Cromwell, "and interrupt me not. I know thy history, and know that thou lovest not fighting. Nay, never look big, man; that is waste of valour with me. I know thy history, and that thou hast betrayed the King, and yet livest. But mark me, betray not *me*; for in the day thou dost thou shalt surely die! I retain thee for secret service: Zerubabel will tell thee the pay, and thou wilt receive it duly. When I require thee, I will send for thee; be ever near at hand, and let Zerubbabel know where to find thee. Farewell;" and turning to his writing again without further notice of him, Slasher felt himself dismissed, and bowed himself out.

“By God!” grumbled Slasher to himself, when fairly out of view of the terrible animal, still half trembling with fear, “is that a way to treat a gentleman? Never mind: his pay will be as useful as it is needful; and we can watch our time for a little bit of revenge.”

With this gentlemanly and Christian reflection Slasher took himself off to Zerubabel, and touching his first month’s pay—which was, indeed, more than he had even calculated upon—he therewith walked to the nearest tavern, and spent half of it at once in treating himself, as he called it, like a gentleman; that is, in devouring a dinner fit for a prince, and getting uproariously drunk. Well was it for him that Cromwell did not immediately want him, or the guard-house and stripes might have been his portion; his gentlemanship to the contrary notwithstanding.

Here, before proceeding with our story,

let us pause to indulge in a few reflections on the singular and singularly misunderstood history of the period. When we find it stated in Lord Clarendon, and Rushworth, and the numerous subordinate histories of the Civil War, that the feeling, not only of the nobility and gentry, but of the people was with Charles; and when we see, nevertheless, that he was continually suffering defeat, driven from one post to another, till he had not where to lay his head; and was finally put to death, without a hand being lifted to save him; we wonder that such things could have been.

But is the representation of these historians correct? Could it be that—if not only the powerful and wealthy classes, but the people, were with Charles, he could, by any imaginable amount of folly and want of ability in himself and his generals, have been so completely, so utterly defeated, ruined, and abandoned? In truth, the noble and wealthy classes were *not* with him; nor

were the people. That the gentry *felt* with him and his cause, is true enough; but their sympathy was sentimental, not active: that the commercial classes, then already risen to considerable importance, were with him, is *not* true; and for the people at large, they were, as they usually are in such conflicts, neutral. They stood by: they watched the game, but they took little part in it. True it is, that as the King's fate approached, pity for his misfortunes obliterated all other feelings; and thousands, in the momentary feeling, said "God bless him;" but their friendly disposition went no further than sympathy and pity.

The King's failure throughout the Civil War had arisen from that very common and homely cause—want of money. He was obliged to disband his army, that he had collected on the very first outbreak of the Scots, because he could not pay them. In nearly all the engagements that were fought between his troops and those of the

Parliament, he was ill-provided with stores and artillery, arising from want of money; and after the battle of Naseby he was unable to get another army together, from the same cause. During the same time, the Parliamentary Government was abundantly provided with troops and stores, and the means of keeping their forces in good working condition.

How was this? If it had been true that the King had for friends the wealthy classes and the people, he could have obtained money; for though war had begun, and the King and the Parliament no longer acted together, the levying of money by Parliament alone, was just as illegal, and was perfectly understood to be as illegal, as the levying of it by the King alone. Yet the people paid the contributions levied by the Parliament, while they refused, or neglected, to furnish any to the King.

If, notwithstanding that, the great body of the nobility and the gentry, and any con-

siderable portion of the commercial classes, had really sided with the King, in the sense of being substantially and practically anxious for his success, they had the means of supplying him with resources adequate for carrying on the war; but they did not supply him. They were ready enough to abuse the canting Roundheads, as they called him, and to swear and drink for the King; but they denied him the use of that without which he could not but fail in the contest.

Lord Clarendon himself naively mentions an anecdote very germane to this subject, of a loyal gentleman who, on the King's writing to ask him for an advance of £500, sent him £100, accompanied by a letter in which he swore, "with horrible imprecations," says Clarendon, that he never had had £500 at a time in his possession. Yet, shortly after, this very gentleman, being pressed for money in a rather more summary way by the Parliamentary Commissioners,

was found to have in his bedroom £5,000 in specie!

It is quite idle to argue that the King had no money, because he had no power to levy it by *force*; and that the Parliament had money, because they had power to levy it by *force*. The Parliament never could have been in a position to possess an armed force at all, unless money had been cheerfully paid by the people. The real truth, I take it, is, that the people, though not personally hostile to the King, did not like, and resisted, his Government; conducted, as he had all along evinced a wish to conduct it, free from Parliamentary control. Hence they *refused* to submit to contributions levied by the King, and *did submit* to contributions levied by the Parliament.

The inference from all this is, that the King's cause was not popular—that is, was not supported by the bulk of the nation.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOMICILIARY VISITATION.

COLONEL FRANKLAND was living in entire seclusion at Willingham with his daughter and his friend. The guard of the Commonwealth soldiers had been withdrawn, after the King's imprisonment at Hurst; probably because the King's cause, being apparently so entirely broken, no such precautions were deemed further requisite; partly because Cromwell required the presence of the army more immediately in, and in the vicinity of London, and was, therefore drawing

together his reserves from various parts of the country for that purpose.

Shortly, however, after Elijah's guard had been withdrawn, and himself, as we have seen, employed about the person of the General, three individuals were sent down from London, bearing the General's authority, to occupy apartments in Willingham House on the part of the Parliament. What their precise functions were, was not made very clear to Sir John and his friend, as the warrant ran merely that Sir John was to receive and provide for the accommodation of the gentlemen acting under the General's orders and the authority of Parliament: and more of the object of this sort of domiciliary visitation they did not communicate. They gave very little trouble; were singularly moderate in their demands upon the Knight's hospitality; and appeared to spend their time principally in reading and writing in the sitting apartment provided for their accommodation; in loitering

about the grounds ; and occasionally playing at cards ; but never for money. Their dress was scrupulously puritanic ; and, but for one of them now and then (it was only now and then) commencing a phrase with a sort of dash, which seemed to indicate lips erst accustomed to an oath, it would have been difficult not to have taken them, one and all, for as staid, sober, and demure a trio of out and out Puritans, as the times (and they were prolific in such specimens), could boast.

They might, of course, have, without opposition, intruded themselves into the domestic circle of Sir John ; but they did not do so : and their behaviour was altogether so quiet, unobtrusive, and retiring, that, after a while, Sir John began to think he was really wanting in hospitality, in not inviting these very worthy gentlemen, Roundheads though they were, to his board. Accordingly he did so ; and occasionally, but very rarely at first, they accepted his invitation. But by degrees intimacy increased, and,

though they still never obtruded their company on the family, their faces grew to be familiar, and they had the *entrée* everywhere in the house; so that they prowled about unobserved like tame cats. And, if they joined the family circle at the evening meal, well; if they did not, no one asked where they were or what they were doing. Of course, when they were present, conversation was usually very general; though, as they appeared to be in possession, from time to time, of the proceedings in London, and communicated them very freely, Sir John, who affected not to conceal his loyalty—indeed it would have been useless—would, every now and then, rap out a bitter sarcasm, or an imprecation, against Cromwell and the Parliament, and, as he called it, “the whole brood of them.”

But Frankland, on such occasions, maintained always the greatest reserve and silence; making no observations, and showing little or no emotion. Not so, however, when he

and Sir John and Rachel were alone ; then, indeed, as at each step towards the King's trial, the news of the proceedings were communicated to them by their Roundhead guests, he would vehemently express his regrets and indignation : sometimes going so far as to express regret that he had ever, by drawing his sword for the Parliament, precluded himself, as a man of honour, from joining the relic of the King's friends, and arousing the party to make a last effort to save his life. But these conversations never took place except when they were sure that their puritan friends were far away in their own apartments, or otherwise at a distance, in the house or in the park.

Colonel Frankland was, therefore, thunder-struck when, one morning, a party of horse arrived, commanded by a young officer who had served under himself ; and when that gentleman very politely informed him that he was under arrest, and must proceed with him to London.

“Under arrest, sir!” exclaimed the Colonel;
“for what, and by whose authority?”

“My authority,” replied the officer, respectfully, “is one you will hardly dispute: the order of General Cromwell. Sir, the cause of your arrest you will hear when arrived in London.”

There was no help for it: resistance was hopeless, and Colonel Frankland prepared himself for his unwelcome journey. When the Roundhead gentlemen heard the purpose of the arrival of the soldiers, they were struck with amazement and sorrow; and expressed their sympathy with Colonel Frankland, and their anxiety on his account, with so much earnestness, that had he not been overwhelmed by his own feelings, he must have been struck with the disproportion between their love for him and the length of their acquaintance. But, being agitated by his own feelings, he was touched with these marks of sympathy from members of his old party; and, as they wrung his hand on part-

ing, and almost shed tears, he was deeply moved.

When Colonel Frankland arrived in London, he was conveyed to White Hall, and there transferred to an apartment where he was kept close prisoner. Days and weeks passed, and he saw no one, except the sentinel who brought him his meals, and the attendant who kept his apartment in order; but from neither could he obtain the slightest information about the cause of his confinement. He was supplied with books, and permitted to write to his daughter; but to no one else. In other respects, he was made as comfortable as a man can be in solitary confinement; and was treated with the respect due to his rank and character. Of news he had none. In those days there were no newspapers to tell of the daily changes of public events; and, if there had been, he would not have been allowed the sight of them; so that, but for keeping a reckoning from the time he came into his

prison, he would scarcely have known one day from another, or whether he had been confined for weeks or months.

Meanwhile, the three Roundhead gentlemen remained at Willingham. The youngest of the three, whose name, or at least the name by which he was called by the others, was Joshua Sleek, considerably altered his conduct after Colonel Frankland's departure. From being rarely in the apartments of Sir John and Rachel, he was now seldom out of them; from being very quiet and retiring he became rather forward and obtrusive; especially, from being very shy and respectful towards Rachel, he began to be very affectionate and troublesome in his attempts at gallantry: and, in fact, he had all the outward appearance of making desperate love to her. At times, when he dropped the oily sanctity of the manner which he had hitherto borne since his arrival, Rachel fancied there was a reckless, impudent, look about the countenance, that reminded her of some

face she had seen before; but yet, when she looked at the close shaven face, the cropped hair, and the elongated looking ears projecting from beneath the velvet scull-cap, she could not recognize or trace the original that her fancy had conjured up.

At length, however, the attentions, as they are called in modern times, of Joshua became so marked and offensive, that she was compelled to repulse them with indignation; and then the sallow scowl, the unwholesome glow in the fierce yet cowardly eye, that her indignant contempt called up in the features of the baffled Joshua, recalled to her, as when a flash of lightning illuminates suddenly some dark spot, the face—the identity of the creature before her. She shuddered to think what a desperate and base villain they had been compulsorily harbouring so long; yet she dared not avow her recognition, knowing that she and her guardian were both in the power of a wretch who would scruple at nothing to obtain revenge,

and fearing that the extent of his power might be greater than she knew. Oh! for one hour of the presence of Hubert, or of her stalwart friend Elijah, to free her from that of this hated and despised persecutor. Fear not, sweet Rachel! help is at hand, and nearer than thou thinkest.

Hubert, released, or rather dismissed, from his attendance on the King after his arrival at Windsor (for the authorities in power, though they allowed Charles the attendance of his old friend and spiritual adviser, Dr. Juxon, restricted his attendance to one person), had arrived late at night at Wilingham, after Rachel had retired to rest; and, ardently as he desired to see her, he would not permit her to be disturbed.

It was now long since he and his father had met, and there was much change in both. Hubert had grown larger and stronger; his complexion, bronzed by exercise and continual exposure, was of a ruddy brown; his frame, naturally well-knit and

strong, had become almost herculean in its muscular power; and his hands, though not large (the hands of thorough-bred men rarely are), had a grasp like that of a vice. Sir John, on the contrary, had felt the increase of years and of trouble: his hair, only *mele* when his son had left him, had become nearly white; his tall and portly figure had become thinner and slightly bent. Still there was fire in his eye, and the hue of a healthy old age on his cheek.

Warm was the embrace of the father and son, and for some time neither could speak. The old man was the first to break silence: holding his son at arm's length, and scanning him from head to foot with a happy look,

"Hubert," he said, "thou art not the worse for having served thy King through battle and hardship. I had pictured to myself thy return as a worn-out haggard-looking soldier, and thou comest back to me a stalwart man. With a few regiments

of men such as thee, the King would not have been beaten."

Hubert smiled sadly.

"Alas! my dear father, the King had hundreds such as me, and better men; but I know not how it has been, neither fighting nor negotiating ever seem to have had any luck. The hand of God is upon us, I fear; as the enemy take delight in saying. Sure I am, that Marston Moor and Naseby we ought to have won, if bravery could have won battles; for never saw I more gallant charges than our horse made under the Prince. But all, I fear, is over now: there is not even the wreck of an army to rally round the King; and he is doomed to death."

"Surely they will not slay him, Hubert! Can the people of England suffer such an unheard-of atrocity?"

"Men talk of his trial, sir, as of a thing certain this very month."

"The trial! the trial of the King! By

whom? by what authority can the people try the King?"

"Alas! sir, Cromwell and his army have the authority in their own hands, and they will not ask for precedents of law, nor of justice."

"Oh, that one half, nay, the whole of my estate could purchase the King's life," exclaimed the old Knight passionately. "Cheerfully would I go forth a beggar into the world, so I could see this cursed faction put down, and the King's rights restored!"

Ah! if Sir John, and a hundred others like him, who were so willing, when it was too late, to have sacrificed all their worldly goods for the King, had but thought of giving him a tithe of them in the beginning of the war, Cromwell might never have been Protector, and the King might have still held his own: not as he commenced his reign, perhaps, an almost despotic King, but—better far for his people's and his own

happiness—as a constitutional monarch, surrounded by checks upon despotism, but freed also from its perils.

“But where is Frankland?” asked Hubert, after a pause; “I heard he had left the army, and come back to Willingham. He hath not left thee again?”

“Not *left* me, Hubert; he hath been *dragged* from under this roof by the order of the Lord General, as they call him. The Lord General! The Lord Devil! What hath he to do, the base-born churl, to bestride the land like a colossus, and trample on the liberties of all men! They talk, these men, of the tyranny of the King! Heard ye ever that the King did, of his sole warrant, drag men forth from their homes, unheard, unaccused even? for the officer who came down to arrest him, knew not—or would not say—of what he was accused: nor can I conceive; since, before these rascally Round-head Commissioners, or something—I know not what they be called—who are here again

under warrant of my Lord General,—curses be on him!—before them, Frankland never spoke word of Cromwell, nor of aught politic.”

“Who and what are these Commissioners?” asked Hubert.

“I know not: they are decent and well-behaved; but what they came for, or what they remain for, I cannot guess. They do nothing, that I see.”

“But hast thou made them free of the house, my father?”

“Why, truly, I have concealed nothing from them: of what use would it have been to try? They could force their way anywhere, an’ I had refused them.”

“True, sir; but I like them not: hast thou invited them here?”

“Truly; often have they been my guests: and here they came as oft as they liked, in my absence or in my presence.”

Hubert walked to a closet in one corner of the room in which some old arms and

old folios were kept, and which was rarely used or opened. He opened the door and examined it.

"Sir," he said, "one hath been here: the books are displaced, and piled up so as to leave standing-room behind that suit of armour."

Sir John looked in also, and stood aghast.

"Hubert, that closet has not been opened by me or Rachel for months; and thou knowest the domestics are not permitted to enter it."

"Nevertheless, a man hath been here; and the more," he said, stooping and picking up a paper, "that he hath left a mark behind him."

The paper was an order for pay to Alfred Slasher, signed O. C.

"By all that is holy!" he exclaimed, "is it that infamous Slasher who has been here?"

"Surely not," replied his father: "I have not seen the rascal since that day that he betrayed his post to save his cowardly carcase."

"Nevertheless, this doth belong to him; and unless he had been here, and in this closet, how should it come here?"

"I know not, I cannot guess," said the old Knight, utterly bewildered: "none have been here, save the three Commissioners; and they are as Puritanic looking rascals as ever I saw."

Hubert did not prolong this discussion; he had his suspicions, though, and determined to inquire into the matter.

The next morning he woke early, and, unable to sleep further for thinking of Rachel, he rose and sauntered forth into the park. He was unarmed, saving his heavy riding whip; which he took with him, more to have something to dangle in his hand than for any other purpose, as he anticipated no danger in his father's park. Slowly he was pacing down one of the long winding paths, at some little distance from the house, when he saw approaching a tall figure in the dress; yet there was a jaunty gait

in the map that belonged not to his sect. The man, whoever he was, looked about and then cautiously concealed himself behind a tree.

Hubert thought his movements very suspicious, and determined to watch him; and therefore concealed himself also. Presently, from his hiding-place, he saw approaching the well-known and loved form of Rachel: she was walking with her eyes bent on the ground, apparently full of thought, and of painful thought; for now and then she clasped her hands as though some sore trial beset her. And, indeed, she was thinking of her father and of Hubert, and of the painful position she was herself placed in, persecuted by Joshua, yet daring not even to complain to her father, and without a friend to shield and protect her.

As Rachel approached the spot where the man was concealed, he issued forth and, raising his cap, with a rather courtly bow approached her.

“Ha! lovely Rachel, I greet thee,” he said. “I came forth to enjoy the beautiful morning air; little did I hope to see such a vision of beauty as I now see before me.”

“Master Sleek,” replied Rachel, with some asperity, “I have already told thee that language such as this becometh not a maiden’s ear; I pray thee leave me, and pursue thy walk: our paths are not together.”

“And wherefore not, sweet Rachel? why wilt thou not listen to the voice of one who loves thee? Dost thou think that a Puritan hath a heart of stone and cannot love?”

“I beseech you, sir, no more of this; you are here to do the commands of your General: surely he hath not commanded you to insult a defenceless lady!”

“Now, by God!” cried Joshua, getting irritated at the lady’s cold and contemptuous manner, “I will not be fooled thus: if thou canst not listen to the voice of love, thou shalt bow to the strong arm of power;” and,

approaching her, he threw his arm round her waist, and drew her, struggling and shrieking, towards him. But before he could well clasp her in his embrace, he received such a stunning blow in the face from a hand of iron, that he loosed his hold, and reeled back, staggering; then, recovering himself, he saw before him Hubert, whom he perceived to be unarmed.

“Ha!” he cried, “our gallant Captain! and is not one damsel enough for thee?” and pulling out a pistol, he pointed it at Hubert, desiring him to retire or take the consequences.

But Hubert had heard the crack of too many pistols to be thus frightened; and, rushing upon Joshua, he seized the hand which held the pistol just in the palm, and forced back the wrist with such a jerk as nearly to dislocate it, and to throw the pistol on the ground; then suddenly grasping his opponent by the throat with the left hand, with the other Hubert belaboured him

with his heavy riding whip, till he ceased from sheer fatigue of his arm; and, throwing his antagonist on the ground, bruised and scarcely able to move, he turned and walked rapidly after Rachel, who had fled to the house. He soon overtook her—and well was it that he did so, for, half dead with fright and agitation, she was ready to sink as he came up—and, gently placing his arm round her waist, supported her.

If Hubert's service, and his absence and fatigues had been ten times as long, and as hard as they had been, the love that he met in Rachel's sweet eyes would have repaid him fifty fold: it was not the mere gratitude for a service that her look expressed; it was not mere love; it was the deep, the old enduring love of years, blended with delight at being saved by the man she loved. He pressed his lips to hers; and a long, long kiss (it was the first), such as only lovers know, told her how truly, how fervently her love had dwelt in his heart

through every change that time and war and hardships had wrought.

"Dear Rachel," he said, after a few moments, "I have longed for such a moment as this. Thou wilt not be angry with me for telling thee that I love thee more fondly than ever. Years have passed since we were little more than children; but as a child I loved thee, and now as a man I love thee. Say that thou forgivest me."

"Dear Hubert," she replied, looking up in his face, "I bless God thou art returned. Now, indeed, we may be happy, in spite of all the miseries of war and tumult;" and she took his hand and fondly kissed it.

"My own beloved Rachel. But thy father? he will not refuse to entrust thee to me to guard thee henceforth through life?"

"No, Hubert; my father hath long, I know, wished, though he hath not spoken the words to me, that thou and I should be betrothed: and thy own father, will he

like that thou shouldst wed the daughter of an exile?"

"Rachel, I am my father's only son. Never have I disobeyed him, nor willingly given him pain. My father will desire my happiness, and without thee there is none for me."

"Let us then seek him, dear Hubert. Thou needest not my words to know that I love thee. But I will not bring danger and poverty into thy father's house save with his own consent."

"Fear not, Rachel: I fear not my father. We will, as thou sayest, seek him at once, and I will tell him all: though I well believe he knows our love full well already, and has long wished that thou and I should be husband and wife. Thou wilt be my wife, dear one?"

Rachel answered not; but she pressed his arm closer and leant upon him, as though he were, indeed, her husband and protector. Then they walked on towards the house.

Few words were spoken for some time, for their hearts were too full for speech: but now and then a gentle pressure of the hands, and a look into each other's eyes, told how fondly they loved each other, how happy they were in that one hour of revealed affection.

"Ah! dear Hubert," said Rachel, breaking this sweet silence, "thou hast much to forgive me: I have sadly wronged thee."

"Wronged me, Rachel? In what canst thou have wronged me, when thou hast treasured up thy love for me through these years of absence?"

"Ah, but Hubert, I did once doubt thee. I should not have done so: it was cruel: thou wouldst not have doubted me!"

"I would have broken my heart to doubt *thee*, Rachel. I should sooner doubt my own love than thine. But of what dost thou speak. I know not aught that could have given thee a doubt save my long silence, and that was caused by our being never at

rest; always in the saddle or on the march, and few messengers to be had that could be trusted: thou didst not doubt me for that, sweet one?"

"Nay, Hubert; but men wronged thee, and said thou wast light, and didst trifle with a young damsel who nursed thee when thou wast wounded; and I—forgive me, Hubert, it was very weak, I—no I did not believe it; indeed, I did not believe it—yet it made me very unhappy."

"Thou dost not believe it now, Rachel, dost thou?" asked Hubert gravely. "Thou dost not believe that Hubert Willingham would have been false to thee, and false to honour?"

"No, no," replied Rachel; "long since I have known my foolishness. The maiden herself is now with me, in our household, and I learned from her the truth. But thou art not angry, Hubert?"

"Nay," returned her lover, "this shall answer thee;" and he once more fondly

pressed his lips to hers. "And so," he said, "my little Puritan nurse is in thy service? Hath she lost her sweetheart, Elijah, the stout soldier whose prisoner I was?"

"Nay," replied Rachel, "she hath not lost him; she hath bound him closer to her than ever: they are betrothed, and wait but for peace to be husband and wife."

"He will be a good husband to her," said Hubert. "He is a brave soldier and a good man; though he was a little harsh to me at last: wherefore I know not."

Rachel thought she knew, but she desired not to probe the subject further. By this time they were close upon the house, and entering, found the old Knight waiting them for the breakfast.

"So ho!" he exclaimed; "Hubert, thou hast found out thy old friend, Rachel, by times, though thou wouldst not have her called up last night, even to see thee."

"I have, my dear father, found her out, and, by God's blessing, I have saved her

from insult, at the hands of one of those Puritan rascals here, who call themselves Commissioners."

"How? Rachel insulted! I trust thou hast paid the villain his due."

"If as sound a horsewhipping as ever man received is good payment, sir, he hath had it. But this is no slight matter—to have beaten a Parliamentary Commissioner: we must take means to avert the consequences."

"Damn the consequences!" exclaimed the old man. "I am glad thou hast beaten the knave, an' he were fifty Commissioners rolled into one. Yet thou art right: we are on the wrong side of the hedge now, and Cromwell may look at the matter very differently. What should we do, Hubert? I want not another troop of horse here, to watch every time I go in and out, and eat me out of house and home."

"Nay, sir," said Rachel, "thou canst not say that the troop that Elijah had here was not well ruled."

"No, girl; he was a very decent person for a Roundhead: I doubt he would not find favour if his General knew how well he treated us poor malignants; but the next may not be like him. What shall we do, Hubert?"

"Methinks, sir, the straightest and boldest course is ever the best for a gentleman. The Willinghams ever rode straight at the foe in battle, and their name is not the worse for it. This Joshua, or whatever may be his proper name—that is not his right name—will surely represent this matter to General Cromwell in a way to suit his own purpose. I propose to go at once to London and see the General, and tell him all that has occurred."

"But, Hubert, may he not detain thee?" asked Rachel timidly.

"Nay, love," replied Hubert; "Cromwell is a bold and a bitter foe, but he is not so bad as you think him. He is a soldier, and will not see a soldier wronged; he is

a keen and subtle man, and knows a true gentleman from a base liar, and he will believe me and will not wrong me: but if there were more danger in acting thus, there must be more still in letting that Joshua tell his own tale. I will go, and that right early. But first, my father, I have to ask thy blessing on thy son and Rachel. Thou knowest I have loved her from a child; now I come back to thee a soldier of the King, and I ask thee to give her to me as my wife."

"And Rachel, does she join in thy prayer to me?" asked his father, looking at Rachel. But he needed no answer, for Rachel's blushes, and the fond look she turned on her lover as he took her hand, saying, "Rachel is content to share my fate," told him pretty plainly how matters stood.

"By all the saints," exclaimed the old gentleman jovially, "thou dost not let the grass grow under thy feet, Hubert. To half kill a Roundhead and win a beauteous

bride in one morning, and that before the morning meal, is no bad day's work, even for a Willingham. Approach, my children," he said, as he sat down in his great arm-chair; "nearer yet: and kneel together."

A little surprised at his sudden change from joviality to solemnity, the young people did as they were bid, and the old man placed his hands on both their heads.

"May the God," he said fervently, "who watches over us all, bless your union. As ye have both loved and obeyed your parents, so may your children love and obey you; and may peace and plenty be your portion, in the place of that war and devastation which it pleaseth God now to spread through this land. If there be aught in an old man's blessing, I bless you; and I pray God that you may be blessed."

For a few moments all were silent, and Sir John passed his hand over his eyes. Then, starting up, with a merry counte-

nance, he called out to them to come and break their fast: and a cheerful and a happy meal was that, though two were lovers with a third person present.

In the afternoon Hubert mounted his horse and rode on to London.

CHAPTER VI.

CROMWELL EN DESHABILLE.

THE wrath of Joshua, *alias* the redoubtable Captain Slasher—whom the reader will doubtless detect, as did Rachel, in the Parliamentary Commissioner—was unbounded, when he recovered sufficiently from his beating to think. Personal revenge he dared not take; the prowess of Hubert had been so signally exhibited to him, that he feared even to attempt to assassinate him: a course to which his mind, very naturally for him, turned. But he felt sure that Hubert would henceforth,

while he remained at Willingham, take care to go armed against any secret attempt; and Slasher, though he would willingly have taken Hubert's life, lacked that which it is said is the only thing that places one man in a position to take another's life with certainty, viz., contempt for his own.

If there was a feeling which Slasher had strongly, it was the instinct of self-preservation; he took, therefore, a course more consonant to his habits of mind: he wrote a long report to Cromwell of the violence to which he had been subjected; taking care, of course, to omit the provocation he had given, and colouring the whole affair so as to make it appear that the violence had been entirely an attempt to bully him out of the execution of his duty to the General, and to drive from the house the servants of the Commonwealth.

But Hubert having, as we have stated, foreseen this, had lost no time after the affray, in taking the open course that was

equally natural *to him*, viz., to go to London and demand an interview with Cromwell.

It was no part of Cromwell's nature to exercise any needless harshness, and now that he could not but see that he was on the threshold of empire, it was becoming his interest to conciliate, as far as he could safely do so, the gentlemen of the Royal party. When, therefore, Captain Willingham, whose conduct as a soldier was well known to him, requested an interview, he gave it at once; and with a message of much courtesy.

Willingham found the General seated in his study, surrounded by piles of letters, Parliamentary papers, and order books; the room was very plainly, even poorly furnished, and the General himself was plainly dressed. Willingham had never seen him but in battle, and was almost startled at the contrast between the fiery and terrible look of the Cromwell he had thus met in the *mêlée*, and the plain, quiet, unpretending

appearance of the farmer-looking gentleman now before him.

Cromwell's countenance no picture represents as handsome; but it had, when in repose, much gentleness, even softness, mingled with the look of power and capacity that his large open forehead, his penetrating eyes, and broad and firm jaw unmistakeably evidenced; and his voice, though coarse, jerky, and grating, in public speaking, when he was excited, was deep and almost mellow when he conversed.

"I shall rejoice," he said, as Willingham entered, "if there be aught in which I can serve the son of a gentleman, who, though he has been a foe of the Commonwealth, has ever been an open and a fair one."

"Sir," replied Hubert, "I have sought you yourself to state to you a grievance I have received at the hand of your servant: one that I do not believe General Cromwell ever ordered or would sanction. It needs not for me to say that had we met in

person on the field of battle, I should neither have expected nor have shown mercy. But I have never heard that General Cromwell would desire that the homes of Englishmen should be polluted by insult to their daughters."

"How, sir, what is this? Who has dared to use my name as a cloak for such conduct?"

"The man's assumed name, General, is Joshua Sleek. His real name you probably know; if not, I will tell you: it is Alfred Slasher, once a captain of horse in the King's service, from which he was expelled for betraying his post at Willingham to save himself from death. How he came into your service I know not, nor is it my business to inquire: but I found him in my father's house under the garb of your religious persuasion, and in the character of a Parliamentary Commissioner."

"And what hath he done, Captain Willingham? I pray you tell me the whole,

and without reserve. It has pleased the Lord to call me to a high place in this nation, and the cares of government fall almost wholly on me. Would I had not been taken from the repose in which this war found me, to be loaded with such cares: but being, in the unhappy state of this kingdom, as it were, charged with the weight of government, I seek to do justice to all Englishmen alike. Tell me, therefore, what this Joshua, or Slasher, hath done."

Hubert then narrated to him what had taken place, not concealing the extent of thrashing that he had given to the Lord General's Commissioner.

"He is a base cur," said Cromwell, when Hubert had finished; "and hadst thou not beaten him as a cur, I had myself had him flogged like a common thief. See here," he said, pointing to a letter; "I have here his report of this matter. I doubted it could not be true. He seeks to have thy father's house made a barrack for my soldiers; to

guard, as he calls it, against the fury of the malignant old Knight: and other things he asks, wherein I saw there was other motive beside love for the Commonwealth and me. Sir, I pray you believe that I thank you for having relieved me from the task of punishing one of those base tools, that, alas! the necessities of government impose on those whom the Lord hath chosen, to put them in high places: and I pray you believe that no hurt shall come to thy father nor thee for that which has happened."

"Young man," he continued, after a pause, "thou art mine enemy now, and, doubtless, thou hast been taught to believe that I bear hatred to Charles Stewart, and seek in these unhappy wars only to raise myself to greatness. But God, who holdeth the hearts of men in his hand, knoweth that I would have saved the King if he would have let me. God knoweth I have not sought the heavy burthen that is cast upon me. The time

may come, when England will again have peace, and thou wilt then know that to establish that peace, has been ever the aim of him whom thou now hatest as an enemy. Fare thee well, Captain Willingham; think not hardly of me: and remember that those in high places are compelled to do many things they would willingly leave undone, and to use many instruments from whom their very soul recoils."

Hubert took his leave, and with both of these men—so different in character, so opposite in political opinions and party—the interview had wrought on each an impression favourable to the other. Cromwell saw in Hubert the free, open, manly character of the best of the English gentry,—men whom he personally liked far better than the rough, ignorant, and puffed-up *parvenus* with whom he was obliged to consort and surround himself: and Hubert, who had expected to see—as most Royalists did then, and many choose still to see through their spectacles of pre-

judice—a coarse, violent, dictatorial fanatic, was surprised to find a quiet, business-like, gentlemanly, if not polished, man, who spoke of his own immediate business with good feeling, and of public affairs with neither heat, nor mysticism, nor violence. To say he left Cromwell less inimical to his cause, would not be correct; but he certainly left him with less of bitter hatred and horror of his person.

The following day an order came down to Willingham for the three Commissioners to return to London, and Sir John and his family were left to the unmolested enjoyment of quiet.

Slasher, however, though he escaped further punishment, did not escape severe rebuke. Cromwell sent for him as soon as he returned; and, on his entering the room, hoping to hear something that would both feed his revenge and his covetousness (for, being ignorant of Hubert's journey, he of course relied upon the lying report with which

he had favoured the General), he was astonished, and completely taken aback, by finding himself instantly the subject of one of those rough homilies, with which Cromwell was wont to flagellate those who had served him ill.

“How is this, sirrah,” he said, in a loud and angry tone, “that thou hast dared to go beyond my commands, and seek thy own vicious pleasure, to the insult of a noble gentleman, and the injury of my service? Did I send thee for aught except to watch the movements and the language of Colonel Frankland? Did I not expressly command thee that thou shouldst do so with as little disquiet to Sir John Willingham as might be? and now I find thou hast dared to molest Mistress Frankland with thy love and thy violence! Out upon thee! dost thou think the vows of such a base coward as thee, could be aught but insult to the ears of any decent maiden? Nay, point not to thy letter: it is false, and thou knowest

it is false. How hast thou dared to palter with me, and write to me false reports? Beware of repeating such conduct. Thou hast been punished; and had the young man, Hubert, slain thee on the spot, it is not Oliver Cromwell who would have avenged thy death. But beware how thou again darest to exceed, yea, even by a fraction, the orders I give thee. Thy neck may answer for it. Not a word: begone, sir! Yet be within reach; I may want thee for dirtier service yet than spying: and methinks," he added, with a loud and contemptuous laugh, "thou wilt not spurn any that brings thee gold."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEARCH.

LIFE was quietly flowing on at Willingham, as life does in most cases, in a mixed stream of happiness and anxiety. The Knight and Rachel passed their days in a monotonous round of home occupations: neither with very quiet minds; both anxious about the fate of the King; both naturally still more anxious about their own immediate friends: and there was ground for anxiety on account of both Hubert and Frankland. The former had been readmitted to attend

upon the King in his captivity, and had remained in London for that purpose; and none could tell in those perilous times whether the same blow that struck the master, might not also strike his devoted servant.

For Frankland, there was even more ground for anxiety; they knew that he must, in some way, have fallen under the displeasure of Cromwell, and was in his power; and they knew that Cromwell was all but omnipotent, and hard and severe to those whom he thought enemies of the State. Not a line, beyond one short letter—merely to communicate that he was well and not harshly treated,—had Rachel heard from her father: for, in truth, he knew not how he stood with the General, nor of what he was accused; and he cared not to commit himself in writing, even to his daughter; for he knew well that his letters might not be sacred, and he was resolved to give his enemies no handle against him.

Margery, too, was without tidings of her affianced husband, and knew only that he was in personal attendance upon Cromwell. Yet both of these young girls were happy in spite of their anxieties: happy in knowing that they were beloved; happy in their faith and trust in their lovers' honour; and, despite the monotony of their lives, they flowed on as we have said, peacefully and calmly: but the calm was not to be of long duration.

It was about a week after the departure of Hubert that the two maidens were together, walking in the gardens behind Willingham House. It was one of those bright sunny, almost warm, mornings in the end of December, which sometimes, even in this climate, resemble more a fine autumn than a winter day; and they were sauntering and talking and enjoying the freshness of the sunny air.

"Would that I could hear something of my dear father," said Rachel; "I know not

what I fear for him, yet I do fear that even his life is not safe."

"Wherefore, madam," replied her companion, "shouldst thou fear for his life? he can have done no act that should place him in such peril: your father hath ever well served the General, and even Cromwell hath not the power, if he had the will, to put an innocent man to death merely for leaving his service."

"Ah! dear Margery, I fear thou art too much of a Roundhead thyself to judge fairly of these men: they have all things now their own way, and it is but one step from rejecting the service of the Commonwealth to be called a malignant, and dealt with as such. Alas! my father is too truthful and straightforward of speech to conceal his thoughts; and, when he has disapproved of the course the army is taking, he will say so, though his life should be the forfeit."

"But, dear madam," urged Margery, with

a pretty blush, "he hath good friends; and he hath one near him who will watch over his safety, yea, at the hazard of his own."

"Meanest thou thy own Elijah, Margery? Truly, I do believe he is a stout friend, and will help my father what he can; but recollect, he is but a non-commissioned officer, and hath but little in his power."

"Yet he hath much trust placed in him, madam, and will not see harm done to his old Colonel, if a stout arm and a stout heart can prevent it."

They were thus talking when the sound of a horse galloping rapidly up to the house was heard. Hastening with natural curiosity into the house to learn who had arrived, they found in the dining hall a stranger in travelling dress; he was nearly enveloped in a riding-cloak, and the flap of his beaver was slouched over his face, so that scarce any part of his upper features was visible. Yet the *tout ensemble* was to Rachel too unmistakeable; and, as the servant, having

opened the door, was retiring, she was just about to spring forward with an exclamation of delight; but the stranger bowed so stiffly that she checked herself, wondering whether she could be mistaken. No sooner, however, had the servant withdrawn and shut the door, than, removing his hat, Frankland stood revealed, and Rachel rushed into his arms, exclaiming,

“My father, my dear, dear father, thank God you are with us, and safe!”

“With you, indeed, my Rachel,” replied Frankland; “with you, God be praised! but not safe. Not a moment is to be lost: the pursuers are on my track, and thou must conceal me.”

“Where, where, Margery,” exclaimed Rachel, “shall we hide my father? They will search the house all over: where is the best hiding-place?”

“Oh!” replied Margery, “the closet where Joshua concealed himself.”

“No,” interposed Frankland, “that will

never do: that secret is known, and every secret place they will hunt for and search. No, we must seek safety by taking the simplest of all hiding-places, such as they will not think any one would dream of for such a purpose. Hark thee, Margery, wilt thou let me hide in thy chamber? thou needst fear nothing."

Margery coloured deeply, and looked at Frankland with an imploring look.

Frankland understood her. "There is but one," he said, "who could take umbrage at another man crossing the threshold of thy door: and he will not. It is thy Elijah who is coming in pursuit of me: dost thou understand, girl? I may not say more."

Rachel looked bewildered; but Margery's quick wit caught the idea thus vaguely shadowed, and her countenance brightened.

"Now blessings on his head," she exclaimed; "I ever knew he was a true heart. Follow me, sir," she added, leaving the

room; "thou shalt not have to say that any false prudery in Margery Broadbelt risked the life of the Lady Rachel's father."

Frankland followed her, and she presently returned to Rachel.

"Fear nothing, dear lady," she said, "thy father is safely hidden from all eyes, or I am much mistaken."

While she was yet speaking, the tramp of a party of horse was heard, and in a few moments Elijah rode into the courtyard at the head of a party of twenty dragoons, and, dismounting, struck loudly and impatiently on the hall door for admittance. The old Knight, when first he had seen the party coming, had been disposed to resist; but he remembered the terms on which he had been put by Cornet Joyce, and, commanding the doors to be opened, himself received the Serjeant.

"How now, friend!" he asked, recognizing him; "what is now thy errand? art thou again sent to garrison my poor house?"

“Sir John,” replied Elijah respectfully, but very sternly, “I am not; I come on a different duty. Thou dost harbour in thy house a gentleman, late of the Commonwealth army, presently under sentence of a court martial for treason to that army. Colonel Frankland is in thy house, and I come with the General’s warrant to arrest him. Corporal Zadsnooks, dismount and advance,” he said, “with six of the men; let the rest remain mounted in the court-yard, with swords drawn and matchlocks ready.”

“Colonel Frankland!” exclaimed Sir John, “Colonel Frankland! Man, I have not seen him since he was removed hence by the orders of thy Lord General: is he going to murder *him*, too?”

“Speak not ill of the Lord General,” returned Elijah, almost fiercely. “As to the man, Colonel Frankland, who is little better than a malignant, we have certain information that he fled hither, and we must search the house.”

"Search in the devil's name and be damned to you!" cried the Knight, thoroughly angry at the imputation cast upon him of falsehood; and also thoroughly satisfied that the search would be vain. "Search, an' ye will: I will show ye every nook and corner of the house."

"Forward then, Corporal Zadsnooks," said Elijah, and forward Corporal Zadsnooks did go.

The Corporal was a bulky man, with a large round head, short-cropped caroty hair, small round eyes of a dull light blue, fat flabby cheeks, and a look altogether of that complacent stupidity which thinks itself very knowing.

"Thou art as sharp a knave at work of this sort as I know, Corporal," said Elijah: "I look to thee to ferret out every hiding-place that can conceal this malignant. Would that our orders were not so precise," he added laying his hand, with a grim smile, on his pistol; "or he should not give the Lord

General much trouble after we have once caught him."

On, then, they went, the Knight leading the way through all the sitting-rooms and kitchens and offices; Elijah stopping at every indication of a secret door, or of an apparent sliding panel, and rapping the walls and the floor ever and anon with the pommel of his sword, as if he had found some unexpected trap. Doors were opened, and closets ransacked, and all manner of places where man could or could not have been hid, till the whole party being thoroughly exhausted, Elijah addressed the master of the mansion, and with a manner something touched with the insolence of authority, craved refreshment for his men.

Angry at their behaviour, and yet inwardly chuckling at the discomfiture of the troopers, Sir John ordered a mighty luncheon to be served; and Elijah, like a good officer who cares for his men, saw that they were well replenished, himself filling their cups more

than once. "For," said he, "beloved, we know not what more labour this malignant may give us, and ye must strengthen the inner man even with the flesh of beasts and with the wine-pot: for what saith the Scripture? 'Wine gladdeneth the heart of man;' hum! Wherefore may ye eat and drink, that ye be filled and strong in the cause."

Despite their sanctity, the troopers needed not much pressing, and did eat and drink till they became very lively and valiant; and the Corporal especially, till his little eyes twinkled, and his eyelids blinked like the eyes of "Winky Boss."* Elijah now interfered.

"Truly," he said, "we may use the things of this life with moderation; and ye have eaten and drunken as becomes men who serve the Lord: but more would be

* "Winky Boss," my readers may recollect, is an amusing character in one of Mr. Horace Smith's works; I forget which, not having the book by me.

after the manner of the men of Belial, and we must to our work; wherefore, arise, and when we have returned thanks, we will again search for the malignant."

"Ah! and if I catch him, Serjeant," said the Corporal, "methinks he will not escape me."

"If thou dost catch him," replied Elijah gravely, "of a surety I know thou wilt not let him escape; the more, that the man whose hand taketh him, will receive five pieces of gold from the General's own hand."

"Forward, then!" shouted all the men, who had in fact gone somewhat beyond the line of puritanic moderation, and were very considerably obfuscated: much to the annoyance, it would seem, of their leader, if one might judge from the almost ferocious grimness of his countenance. Having searched the sitting-rooms, and all the ground floor, they now proceeded to the bed-rooms; and Sir John bore it very well,

till they came to the Lady Rachel's: then he burst out,

"What, in God's name," he said, "will ye break into a maiden's chamber in your villanous search? Out upon you for no men, that can do so churlish a thing."

Elijah paused; and turning to Corporal Zadsnooks,

"What thinkest thou, Corporal?" he said: "thou art a shrewd fellow; can we safely depart even from a single letter of the General's orders?"

The Corporal had felt his pride touched by the Knight's appeal; and looking piteously at his commander, with a half drunken sentimental look, answered,

"Nay, it is a sore trial; yet we may surely find some mid-course."

Elijah leaned his head on the pommel of his long sword, after the manner of ancient knights when puzzled; and then, looking up, addressed his second and the Knight.

"I have sought the Lord," he said, "and

he hath answered me; yea, a light hath broken upon my soul. I would fain pleasure thee altogether if I might, but it may not be; yet all these rude men shall not break the privacy of the women's chambers. Thus, then, shall it be. This worthy officer shall alone examine thy daughter's chamber, and I, the while, will examine that of her hand-maiden, called Margery. Corporal," he said, "I know thou art trustworthy; search in all decency and courtesy, but let not the malignant escape thee."

"Be it so," replied Sir John, with a growl. "I can't resist; and I thank thee, good fellow, even for this small courtesy."

Commanding his men, therefore, to stand back, Elijah proceeded to Margery's chamber, and there, we presume, searched very minutely, for he was there a considerable time; and Corporal Zadsnooks searched with equal minuteness in the Lady Rachel's: but they both were unsuccessful in finding Frankland. Shortly afterwards the Serjeant departed with

his troop, to the delight and relief of Sir John; and after proceeding with great vigour and minuteness to search the grounds and park, appeared to give it up as a bad job, and left Willingham.

When the party was fairly and clearly off, and not till then, Colonel Frankland emerged from his hiding-place in Margery's chamber; much to the astonishment of his host, who had not the slightest idea of his presence, and had, in the most perfect good faith, asserted to Elijah that he had not seen him since he had been removed under a guard to London.

“Why Frankland, my old friend!” was his exclamation, when the surprise of his visit had subsided, and their first greetings were over. “Are wonders never to cease? First, the Lord General, as they call him, sends a party of horse to seize thee, and take thee up to London; then thou art kept there, it would seem, a close prisoner for I know not how many weeks; then thou

comest down here, flying as fast as horse will bring thee, with another troop of their infernal soldiers at thy heels; and then they search and search, and pounce upon the very spot where thou hast roosted, and yet find thee not. There is glamourie in this, surely."

"I will tell ye all, my good friend and daughter, if ye will first give me something to eat; for I have ridden from London without drawing bit, and have since that being lying *perdu* in your kind companion's closet, my sweet Rachel; and thou knowest, Willingham, even Roundheads must eat and drink to supply fuel to the brain and arm. While I tell my tale, thou wilt have some means prepared for me to travel further; for I must be at Southampton and take ship for the Continent by the morning. Fear not, Rachel," he said, seeing his daughter turn pale at this announcement, "my life is safe: and, thank God! I trust the little all we have left is safe

also; but only on condition that I put the Channel between me and England."

It may be well supposed that a meal eaten under such circumstances was not very cheerful; though Frankland tried very hard to look, if he could not be so actually. But exercise and hunger will enable a man to do justice to a meal, even though his spirits be charged with grief; and Frankland ate and drank with so much real zest, that it was a better tonic to his daughter's spirits to see him, than would have been a long discourse of comfort. At last he was satisfied, and, leaning back in his chair, he began his narrative.

"When I was taken hence," he said, "I was conducted at once to London, and then taken to an apartment in Whitehall; where I was given to understand I was to remain a prisoner. I inquired of the officer who commanded the party, by whose orders I was thus treated, and by whom and of what I was accused. I could learn nothing.

save that I was placed under arrest by orders of the Lord General, and that I should be tried, when it was his pleasure, by a court martial; that, in the mean time, I should be kept a close prisoner, and that the less I corresponded with *any* one, the better it would be for me. The officer laid strong emphasis on this, and I gathered from his manner that the injunction came from Cromwell himself.

“Days and weeks passed on, and no one approached me, save the soldier of the guard who brought me my meals: but in that, as in all else, I was well treated, except in being kept close prisoner. At length the officer of the guard was changed, and to Serjeant Gideon, whom ye both well know, was committed the command of the guard that watched over my prison. From this I augured well; for I knew that he had been lately much about the General, and the General well knew that he had served under me, and was much attached to his old com-

mander. Still days rolled on, and no other change took place; and, though Gideon was respectful and himself saw that my comforts were provided for, he never addressed me, and I would not compromise the poor fellow by asking him any questions.

“At length, a few days ago, Elijah brought me an order, signed by the Lord General, for my trial by court martial, and with it the charge; which was no less, my friend, than that I, being an officer of the army of the Commons of England, had conspired against them, and had uttered, at divers times, divers treasonable threats and sentiments, and had laboured to bring back the King.”

“And I could almost wish thou hadst been guilty, Frankland,” put in the old Knight.

“I knew the charge to be false and ridiculous. Some foolish regrets I might have uttered in the freedom of conversation with thee, that I had chosen my

part as I did; but I believed those conversations to have been heard by no mortal man but thee; and of aught else I knew I was as innocent as thy Hubert would be of betraying *his* cause. I made very light of it, therefore, till I saw the names of the officers appointed to hold the court martial: but when I saw Colonel Harrison for president, and Colonel Desborough second in rank, and several others, whom I knew for violent and fanatic men, I began to think the matter more serious. Harrison I knew to be an honest man, but no master of his judgment when what he calls backsliding is in question; and Desborough, I knew, had long had an eye to the remainder of my estates being sequestered for the benefit of the State: of which, my friend, he esteems himself *pars magna*. Still, when I thought of my long service and my total innocence of anything but words — and those, words that never could have been heard — I made myself

tolerably easy, and looked for a triumphant acquittal.

“The court martial sat, and when I was called upon to appear, I certainly made a sad mistake. I asked by what authority I was summoned before them, seeing I had resigned my commission, and was no longer subject to the General’s command.

“‘Hear ye this, gentlemen?’ cried Harrison, with flashing eyes; ‘there spoke the blood of the old malignant.’ Then, turning to me, he said, ‘Colonel Frankland, you have resigned, or affected to resign, your commission, it is true; but if, as we are led, by the charges against you, to believe, you had scarcely done so before you began to speak, if not to plot, treason against the Commonwealth, whose officer you were, I need scarcely remind you that such a resignation will not protect you: you can deny our authority or submit to it as you like, but be assured that your trial will go on whether you do or not.’

“By this time I had seen my mistake ; and to correct it, I bowed and said, that I would not insist on my privilege, but humbly submit to their jurisdiction. This, alas ! was a second mistake. The submission which, given at once, would have been attributed to a sense of discipline, was now attributed to a sense of guilt. However, the trial went on, and to prove the charge of treasonable language, the first witness called was that infamous wretch, Slasher, under the name and in the garb with which he had disguised himself.

“I confess, when I saw him brought forward to give testimony against the character of a gentlemen, my blood boiled, and I could scarcely listen with composure to his evidence. He swore that he had heard me say that I regretted I had ever joined the Commonwealth party, and that I wished a party could be got to act to save the King ; and that, if it could be done, I would join with it.

“On hearing this, I interrupted the witness, and appealed to the Court, saying, ‘Know you who this witness is? know you that he was an officer of the King, kicked out of the army for miserable cowardice? Will you allow the evidence of such a man to be heard against an officer.’

“‘Sir,’ said Colonel Harrison, ‘the question is not what the witness *has* been; he is now, praised be the Lord, a servant of the Parliament: he has seen the error of his ways, and is a labourer in the vineyard of the people. But, sir, that is not the question. The question is, speaketh he truth? Dost thou deny, Colonel Frankland, the words he hath imputed to thee? Thou wast ever a man of truth; deny them, and we will believe thee.’

“I held my peace for a moment; then I said, ‘Sir, if I deny them not wholly, yet let me say the words were spoken not in public; they were spoken in communing

with a friend, and if heard, ought not to have been repeated by any one pretending to be a gentleman.'

" 'Clerk, note that the prisoner denieth not the words,' said the Colonel. Then, addressing me, he said, 'Colonel Frankland, thy doctrines about gentlemen, and all that, may be very suitable to thy new party; *we* do not hold that the State is to be served and saved by such chivalrous notions. The words thou spokest were heard, and they are the more treasonable because they were intended to be secret. Proceed, Joshua,' he said, 'with thy evidence.'

"Joshua, or Slasher, then proceeded, and, having succeeded so far in establishing his truthfulness, he stated many other things inculcating me; which, when I denied, I was not believed, because he had commenced by stating the truth. Long was the inquiry, and long the discussions between me and Slasher; who was, however, supported, not only by the other two respectable gentle-

men who were here as Commissioners, but by the fanatic prejudices of Harrison, and the covetousness of Desborough. When it was all over, I saw that my fate was sealed, and I should be condemned of treason to the Parliament,—I who have sacrificed fortune, personal feelings, all the habits of a gentleman's life to their service! I retired. The next morning I was summoned to attend the court martial, and Colonel Harrison pronounced the sentence.

“He said I had served the Commonwealth long,—the more bitter was the falling away; that the evidence showed very clearly that I had abandoned the army just when the presence of men of mark and reputation was most important to its well-being; that I had been proved to have used language only fit for a determined malignant, and which no officer well affected to the Commonwealth ever could have used; and that it was tolerably clear that I was engaged in some plot for the overthrow of

the Parliament and the Lord General. 'And it is the sentence of this Court, sir,' he concluded, 'that you are adjudged to death.' The officers rose; I was removed to my quarters, and left alone.

"Presently, my gaoler, Elijah, came to me. He told me the sentence had been forwarded to the Lord General, and he desired to see me, to hear whether I had aught to say in mitigation; that he had left his horse and a horse for me in the back court-yard, whence a narrow passage led to Charing Cross, and thence we could proceed to Greenwich, where the General then was transacting public business, and that I must prepare to follow him. While he was speaking, a soldier came and spoke to him, saying that the Lord General desired to see him instantly; that he was to wait for no man, no, not an instant. Elijah, desiring me to be in readiness, and reminding me where the horses were, departed instantly, taking the precaution of locking

my door; which he did with so much noise and over care, that, when he was gone, I thought I would look at it, and I found he had locked and unlocked it half-a-dozen times, and left it unlocked. ‘Upon this hint I spake,’ as your favourite Will hath it, and, dressing myself for a ride in my large cloak, I walked quietly forth, and finding the way to the back court-yard, found there also a horse saddled, standing very quietly. I mounted, and pacing leisurely through the passage Elijah had described, soon reached Charing Cross; but I did not go to Greenwich, feeling sure that the Lord General had something to do with the matter, and that the sooner I was out of the way the better he would be pleased.

“I feel sure that, while I live, he will not allow my estate to be sequestered; but I doubt his power to avert it if I remain in England; and, therefore, I must depart without delay. He will take care that I have time to escape, if I dally not: this

evening, therefore, my friend, I must leave you. But thou, Rachel, shalt not go with me — nay, no entreaties; do not attempt to alter my purpose. I leave thee to the guardianship of Sir John, until Hubert's release from his attendance shall permit thy husband to be thy guardian; and my blessing will be on thy union with him. We, Sir John, shall not see peace in England; though our children may."

CHAPTER VIII.

CROMWELLIAN TACTICS.

THE Lord General had, in truth, had much to do in Frankland's escape. Cromwell's situation, at the particular period on which we are now touching, was very peculiar and precarious. He had, at the head of the army, mastered the Parliament; and so long as he held the army with him, he was master of England. But his army was composed of very heterogeneous materials. Among his leading and most popular officers — men not yet sufficiently

accustomed to his rule, except in purely military matters, to enable him to control them, and with whose services he could not dispense, by reason of their talents and the favour in which they were held by the soldiery — among these, I say, were many who competed with him for power. There were others, who, despising the power of this world, were devoured by a wild fanaticism, which led them to contemplate a sort of saintly republic, in which the servants of the Lord were to be all rulers of the people, but all equal among themselves: and there were others, and the most influential, because the most vigorous and determined, who were staunch republicans, and had no mind, having overthrown one master, to have another under a different name.

The men of the latter class were unmitigated in their opinions and conduct towards all who, in the remotest degree, supported monarchy; and, above all, those who, like

Colonel Frankland, had been guilty of what was termed backsliding — a turning back from the plough. For such men they deemed that Tophet was ordained of old; and they would have felt little more compunction at casting them into the fiery flaming furnace, than did Darius with the three Jews of old; or than would an inquisitor of the fourteenth century with any who questioned that a wafer, treated with a certain manipulation, was the real body of God.

Moreover, there were among the officers many who, while the reign of the saints was on their lips, and while their aspirations were all apparently directed toward a spiritual republic, were, nevertheless, keenly alive to the necessity of the future saints being, in the meanwhile, well endowed mortals: they had longing eyes for broad acres, and were never very loth to find guilt in any who, on being convicted, had patrimonial acres to part with. Taking all

these things into consideration, one has a tolerably clear view of the reason why Cromwell was obliged to tolerate many acts, the absurd injustice of which he was far too clear-headed not to see, though not powerful enough to prevent; unless, indeed, he had been willing to exclaim with the Roman, *fiat justitia ruat cælum*: a maxim which, whether it be right or wrong, he was not superhuman enough to be either willing to enforce, or to believe himself capable of enforcing, in the very midst of a political convulsion that threatened anarchy to England, if not controlled by the strong hand.

Cromwell was neither the demi-god that Thomas Carlyle would represent him, nor the demi-devil that Lord Clarendon, and the host of writers who have pinned their faith on his school of political history, would make him out to be. He was simply a man of the greatest capacity, gifted with the most unbounded energy and de-

termination, and a strong instinct for rule. He felt himself capable of reorganising the *disjecta membra* of the political body. He found himself placed, by a series of circumstances, in a position in which the rule of the kingdom must fall into his hands, if he acted with common sense, and did not yield too much to sentiment. He never willingly inflicted suffering; but he would not ruin his own cause, and the cause of political regeneration, to save others from the consequences of their own weakness or vacillation.

Hence, in such cases as that of Colonel Frankland, and which is but a type of the numerous absurdities that were forced upon him by the fanatic folly of his followers, he was not strong enough to act on his own good sense and humane feelings, and could only avert or palliate injustice by temporising. He had, on Frankland's resignation of his commission, entertained suspicions that the man who by his social posi-

tion and ties was naturally bound to the Royalist party, and had only been led by his intellect to side with the popular cause, might, by an easy transition, when he had ceased to go with the revolution, slide back into Royalist sympathies; and he did not intend to permit the Royal cause to gain the adherence of so able an officer. Therefore he had despatched Slasher and his co-ordinate Commissioners to act as spies upon Colonel Frankland, that he might know the state of the Colonel's mind, and the tendency of his actions; so as to interpose whenever it should be necessary, and take measures to defeat any such tergiversation. But he knew well, also, his instruments; and though he received their information, he reserved to himself the construction he should put upon it. But the charges against Frankland had leaked out through the hatred of Slasher, and had reached the ears of other officers of rank; and they urged upon Cromwell that the backsliding malignant, as

they designated him, should be tried for his treason to the State.

Cromwell could not yet afford to thwart the prejudices of his officers to save Frankland, and was therefore compelled to swallow his contempt for their understandings and motives, and to order a court martial. His own rank of course, as Commander-in-chief, precluded his being of the court martial; nor indeed, if he had been, could he have ventured to stem the torrent of bigotry which led men, otherwise able, to see guilt, on such evidence as that produced: evidence on which the clear and cool-headed General would not have hung his tom cat. He, therefore, let things take their course, well knowing that Frankland was prejudged; and he determined only to step in at the last moment, and save himself from carrying into effect the gross absurdity of his officers.

No doubt he might, as Commander-in-chief, have reversed the sentence; but to have done so, would have been to peril his

authority for an object which he did not deem deserving the sacrifice: for, as we have observed, Cromwell, though as careless of his life and his power as any historical man ever was, when the object at stake was vast; though as merciful in the exercise of power as any man possessing so much authority ever was; and, though feeling as much real desire for the good of his country as is usually to be found in that class of God's instruments called ambitious men; was not a sentimentalist. Had he been so, it would have been *his* head, and not that of Charles, that would have rolled on the block; had he been so, the Civil War would never have assumed the substantial form that laid the foundation of the free institutions with which this country has since been blessed.

Cromwell, I say, was not a sentimentalist; and, though willing to save Frankland, if he could without peril to himself, he was not disposed to weaken his own authority by

an injudicious stretch of it, to save a man, who, after all, had brought upon himself his fate, by joining a party without well considering the work that party had to do, and had then shrunk from it, at the very moment when determination in its objects was essential to its very existence.

Still the General did not like to spill blood when it could be spared, and he liked still less, gross folly. He resolved, therefore, in his own manner, to see that the sentence of the fanatic court martial should be a *brutum fulmen*.

On the sentence being presented to him for ratification by Elijah, who was the orderly in attendance, he looked at it, and, with a slight sneer, took a pen and dashed off the well known Oliver Cromwell at the foot of it; ordering sentence to be executed that day week. Then he took a few turns up and down the room, and thus addressed Elijah.

"Thou hast served under this Colonel I think, friend?"

"Yea, my Lord, I have," replied Elijah.

"And he was a good officer and kindly to his men, I bethink me?" said Oliver.

"Truly, sir; he was a noble officer, and greatly beloved of the regiment."

"Ah!" said Cromwell, "but men must love others well indeed before they will risk life or limb or worldly goods for them."

Elijah looked inquiringly at his commander, but made no reply.

"I say," repeated Cromwell in a louder voice, "that a man must be much beloved before his fellows will risk a little for him. Dost thou love thy old Colonel?"

"Ay, truly, my Lord," replied Elijah, "I love him well enough to do aught for him that I might without failing in my duty to thee and the Parliament."

"Thou shouldst have said to the Parliament and me," said Cromwell, with a smile. Then putting both his hands on the Serjeant's shoulders, he looked right into his

eyes with that clear, strong, searching look, which was one of the peculiarities of Cromwell. Elijah flinched not under it, and Cromwell relaxed his hold. "Thou art to be trusted," he said; "I read thee for an honest man: would to God I had more such! Hearken; thou wilt take this warrant to the Colonel, and thou mayst tarry with him alone for a space, and speak such comfort as thou canst. But I may have need of thee; if I send for thee, do thou come back quickly: and mark, when thou dost leave him, have a care," he said very slowly and deliberately, "to lock the prisoner's door: thou must surely lock it, I would not have him escape. But an' he should escape, thou wilt take a score of horse and pursue: thou wilt be sure to overtake him; therefore, ride not the beasts unmercifully. The horses of the Parliament cannot be destroyed, even for the sake of catching a malignant a little sooner. Dost thou understand me?" he said, with an

expression of countenance, in which benevolence, and a certain degree of waggishness (which was one of Oliver's characteristics) were strangely blended.

"My Lord, I believe I do," replied Elijah, with a look of great stolidity.

"Then go thy ways: and, mark me, forget that thou hast seen Oliver Cromwell this day. Do thy service well, and thy General will not forget thee."

Elijah was quick-witted, as well as brave; and as he would have perilled his life, though he was too honest to break his oath as a soldier, to save Frankland, he had no difficulty in conceiving that he was just to translate his commander's orders backwards. Accordingly, he made the arrangements with Colonel Frankland, by which, as we have seen, with a show of vigilance that would have deceived any but Oliver himself, Frankland quietly escaped to Wilingham, was quietly overlooked there, and as quietly went to Southampton, and on

board of a ship, then sailing for France, just as Elijah commenced his march from the neighbourhood of Willingham to catch him.

Harrison and Desborough, when they found that the prisoner had escaped, were urgent with Cromwell that steps should be taken to confiscate his property. But Cromwell told them he would have nothing to do with it: he had his doubts whether the sentence was right; nevertheless, out of respect for the Court, he had signed it and ordered the execution; but, if they could not keep their prisoner when they had him, it was their own fault. And he threw out hints that the President of the court martial was himself open to great censure at the hands of the General commanding, for so serious a neglect of precaution.

“Had I not strictly charged the Serjeant of my personal guard to watch,” he said, “there would not have been even any

pursuit. Look to it well, Colonel Harrison, that the next malignant thou triest escapeth not thus."

There was no more to be said. Harrison and Desborough were but children in the hands of their great chief; and, if they had any suspicions, they dared not give them utterance; and Frankland's lands were not confiscated.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

FROM the time when the leaders of the army determined on the trial of the King, a determination which took place, as my readers will recollect, in the middle of January, 1642, his situation became most painful: not, I mean, in reference to the approaching danger—for that he had been prepared, under the heavy hand of misfortune and with the consolations of religion—but painful in the change which took place in his treatment; which thenceforth was as

wanting in kindness and as full of humiliation as was possible. The ordinary observances of attendance on a gentleman were dispensed with; Charles was left, without even a show of respect from the chiefs, to the rude ministering of the guard placed over him; and his very meals were served, as rations would be delivered out, by the common soldiers of that guard.

These are trifles, perhaps, to a philosophic mind; but there are few minds philosophic enough to meet contumely, when they have been accustomed to respect; roughness almost brutal, when they have been accustomed to polish; and, worst of all, dirt, gross plebeian dirt, when they have been accustomed all their lives to a fastidious and delicate cleanliness in all about them. Yet, to such trials of the habits of a whole life was the King subjected, at a period when, it being all but certain that he was doomed to pass from this world, it would have been but a common exercise of Christian charity to make

that passage as little rugged and bitter as possible.

On the justice or propriety of the trial and execution of the King, it is scarcely part of the business of a novelist to dissert; yet on that question I will say, that good and sensible men may well, even at this distance of time, hold different opinions. But whatever may be men's opinions on that question, this at least is clear, that, when imprisoned and destined for the ordeal of a trial—unknown, at least, to the laws and usages of the land, even if it was justifiable—it was a base neglect of the commonest charities of Christian men not to extend to the King the outward respect and substantial comfort, of attention to his rank; to his life long habits; to his grievous misfortune; and it is a foul blot on the escutcheon of all concerned, more especially of Cromwell, who had the power to order it otherwise, that the last moments of the man who was, at any rate, a King,

though an unfortunate and, perhaps, a blameworthy King, should have been oppressed by contumely and coarse neglect. There is no excuse for it; not even in the rudeness of the age: for men of such intellect as Cromwell are in advance of their age; and he might have well so far presumed, as to have surrounded the devoted King with all that could temper the bitter fate that was reserved for him.

Charles was then, as I have said, not a mere prisoner, but a despised and insulted prisoner. But misfortune, which he had never had the wisdom to avert, he had, at least, the magnanimity to endure, with the fortitude of a Spartan, and the patient resignation of a Christian. Often, when his old and tried clerical friend, Bishop Juxon, and his more fiery young Cavalier attendant, Hubert, were ready to explode with indignation at the slights put upon their Royal master by the rough soldiers of the Commonwealth, would Charles himself check

them, and with gentle reproof remind them that it became not a Christian man to resent injuries.

On one occasion, when the King's dinner, being brought in, was almost flung upon the table by the soldier who brought it him, clothed in dirty armour, and still reeking with the fumes of tobacco, Hubert burst out.

"Out upon thee, thou base knave," he said; "is it thus thou bearest thyself before the King?" and he was springing forward to chastise him on the spot; but Charles restrained him.

"Nay," he said, "Hubert, be not angry; the poor fellow meaneth no wrong: he hath seen his officers treat me contemptuously. What can he know but that it is right so to treat Charles Stewart? Get thee gone, good fellow," he added good-humouredly to the soldier; "yet stay," handing him a few silver pieces, "the King is but poor now, but he hath still a few pence to get a draught of ale for an old soldier."

The soldier slunk out, ashamed of his rudeness; and Hubert, rebuked by the quiet dignity of his Sovereign's patience, held his peace as they sat down to their homely meal.

The King, however, though he bore these things with patience, and with an outward show of cheerfulness, was deeply moved and wounded by them.

"It is hard to bear," he said, after eating for some time in silence, "this rude and rough treatment. Surely a changed spirit hath come over the people of England, when they can thus suffer their King to be insulted by the very common soldiery. Alas! what it forbodes, I fear to think; yet, they cannot—they cannot mean, Juxon, in truth, to put in force this threat of trying the King. I am the head of the State still: has it ever been heard, in the wildest times of the history of this land, that the people have sat as judges upon the King?"

"Alas, sir!" said Juxon, "I know not what to fear or to expect. I believe not

that the people have yet so far lost all sense of allegiance to your Majesty, as to desire this outrage. But the people are now nothing. It is Cromwell and his fierce army that rule the land; and there are men among them who, I fear, have no more reverence for the kings of this earth, than they would have for the meanest of your Majesty's soldiers."

"Thou dost not think, Juxon, that they will dare to persist?"

"Nay, sir, I know not," replied the Bishop. "But I would entreat your Majesty to dismiss these painful thoughts. Let us trust in the Lord of Hosts that he will protect you."

"I do, my old friend, place my trust in Him, and Him alone; for in man, I see, none can be placed. What have I done, that my people should thus rise up against me, and thirst for my blood? Was it I who began this unnatural war? Have not the Commons, from the first hour when I

ascended the throne of my fathers, sought occasion for quarrel with me? Have they not refused me the supplies needful for government? Have they not even sought to insult and degrade their Sovereign? Have they not pried into my very household life, and sought to direct how the King should pray? Oh! Strafford, Strafford!" he continued, in a fit of ungovernable emotion, "would that I had stood firm when these men of blood sought thy life. Had I saved thee, I should not now be without a friend powerful to save my throne and life. It is too late, it is too late!" And the King bowed his head on the table, and tears fell from his eyes.

In a few minutes, however, the paroxysm passed away; and, turning to his friends, the King began again to converse cheerfully, though still on the subject of the threatened trial.

"They can," he said, "take no more than my life, and that I have ever been

willing to resign for the good of my country. If it be the will of God that I should die for England, I will die cheerfully, if my death is to be the price of peace. But it is hard, gentlemen, for one who has been King, to bear the treatment of a common malefactor. Let the subject pass for the present. And thou, my young soldier," he said, turning to Hubert, "this is but a melancholy life for thee. I warrant thou wouldst rather be sitting by the side of thy Rachel, who I hear is a sweet and beauteous maiden."

Hubert coloured high; but he rose, and taking the King's hand and kissing it respectfully, he replied, with some emotion,

"That I would fain be by Rachel's side for a few moments, if your Majesty were in safety and again at the head of an army, I will not deny. But it is not a Willingham who could enjoy his own happiness with a quiet heart, while the King needs a faithful servant."

"I doubted not thy love for me, Hubert," said the King, gently passing his hand over the young man's head; "but I have been young myself, and I know where the young heart must be: it grieves me to the soul to be the cause of misery to all who love me. But, about thy Rachel: is her father safe? I heard he had been brought to a court martial: knowest thou for what?"

"Because, sire, he had expressed some kindly feelings towards your Majesty; and he was tried and condemned to death."

"Death!" exclaimed the King, with a look of horror. "Death for a few words of pity for a discrowned King! Oh, England, England! ye would kill your King as a tyrant; and to what far deeper tyranny than ever Charles Stewart was guilty of, will ye be surrendered? But surely, surely they cannot have put him to death for that!"

"No, sir, he has escaped; and in my

inmost heart I cannot but think that his escape has been favoured."

"By whom?" said the King, eagerly.

"By the General; by Cromwell himself. How else could he have escaped, surrounded as he was?"

A bright gleam of hope shot across the King's face.

"There is mercy in him yet," said he, as if speaking to himself. "He *can* save me. Will he? God knows: may His spirit descend upon him, and soften his heart."

While they were yet speaking, the Serjeant of the guard, our friend Elijah, made his appearance. His countenance was sad and gloomy; his manner was respectful, almost reverential, as he entered, and, raising his hand with military salute, made the nearest approach to a bending of the body, that a soldier of the Parliament could venture upon.

"I grieve, sir," he said, addressing the King, "to be the bearer of an order most

painful to deliver. I am commanded to request that your Majesty will prepare to quit this place for London. A squadron of horse is in readiness to escort you, and in an hour it is hoped your Majesty will be ready to depart."

Charles flushed to an almost purple colour. It was not the man's manner; that was as respectful as the recent treatment he had received was gross: it was not the immediate shock of the communication, overthrowing all his just new-born hopes of Cromwell's interference: it was not the fear of death. It was a mixture of feelings. Proud, even in this last extremity,—still believing himself King, still feeling as a King—his pride was shocked at receiving, as it were, orders from his people: orders not the less peremptory that they were conveyed in respectful language. He had, for a moment, buoyed himself up with hope; and visions of safety, perhaps of restoration, had passed like golden clouds over his disturbed brain. And now

this message came like an electric shock, making his brain reel and his heart almost cease its pulsations. But the King soon rallied, though the heart of the man fainted: rising with dignity, he filled a cup of wine and, taking a draught of it, handed the cup with a firm hand to Elijah, saying,

“Drink, friend, of the cup of which I, thy King, have drunk; thou wilt not, in thy decline of life, regret that thou hast tasted of the cup that the lips of Charles Stewart have touched. Bid thy officer be prepared; I will presently be ready to depart.”

Elijah bowed low as he took the cup.

“May the Lord protect you, sir!” he could not help saying.

“Nay, friend,” said Charles smiling, “utter not treason. I have perilled friends enough: I would not that pity for the King should bring into trouble, the only one of my guards who has for weeks recollected that I am the King. These friends,” he pursued, “may accompany me?”

"Surely, sir," replied Elijah: "the Lord General hath expressly commanded that the reverend prelate who is with you should be permitted to remain; and of Captain Willingham, nothing has been said; wherefore, I presume, his attendance will not be prevented."

"I thank thy General even for this small courtesy," said the King. "Farewell."

That evening a carriage, escorted by a party of horse, drove rapidly to London; and before nightfall King Charles was in one of the chambers of Whitehall: never more to leave his prison but for the hall of trial and the scaffold.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARGUMENT.

WHILE the King's trial was being debated, his faithful young attendant, Hubert, was still permitted to be with him, and all that the most respectful and tender attention on his part could do to soothe the King's suffering was done; but confinement and anxiety were obviously wearing down his young spirits, as his shrunken and pale face attested.

"Hubert," said the King to him one day, having observed the young man's worn-out

looks, "thou needest a little change. Captivity is ill for the old, but for the young it is death: go forth and refresh thyself with somewhat of change from this dismal prison."

"If, sir, I could be your escort to leave this, willingly would I go," replied Hubert; "but unless your Majesty desires to be alone, I will not leave you."

"No, Hubert, no," said the King, pressing his hand, "I desire not to be alone; but I cannot bear to see thy young face so sad and worn with fatigue, and, I fear, with sorrow for me. It is grief enough to me to have brought misfortune upon so many friends; I cannot see thee, almost the last whom they have left me, sinking before my very eyes. I tell thee thou needest rest and change; go and leave me, for a day at least, and recruit thyself if thou canst, with some amusement fitting thy age: the King wishes it."

Hubert bowed low, replying, "If your

Majesty indeed wishes it, I will not longer refuse; but for that, I could not have enjoyed even God's fresh air while I left your Majesty a prisoner and alone."

"Go, then, my young friend," said Charles kindly; "I shall the better enjoy the sight of thy face again, when thou returnest to me, with a little more colour and cheerfulness in it."

Hubert, thus almost commanded to take a holiday, prepared himself to go forth in public, and to mingle in the stream of human life, to which he had been for some time a stranger. He took his way from Whitehall and sauntered into the park, listlessly enjoying the fresh air and the hum of voices; things not thought of by those who are free in heart and limb, but pleasant and soothing to him who has been for weeks a prisoner with a heavy heart. Weary, however, after a while, with mere sauntering about, and beginning to feel the cravings of human appetite—which, in the young at

least, no grief or anxiety suffices to postpone beyond certain limits—he bent his way towards the city, intending to amuse himself by examining the booths of the traders, even then gay and lively, though they had not reached the pitch of splendour which graces modern Cheapside. At the same time he looked about for some quiet tavern, where he might dine without risk of riot and political squabble.

Such a place he fancied he had found in Holborn, near the spot where now stands Furnival's Inn, and not far distant from the house long afterwards famous as the dwelling-place of a scholar, then comparatively obscure, but whose fame has since been the fame of England. It was a quiet inn, somewhat standing back from the road, with a small garden-kind of court-yard in front of it, and with a look of substantial comfort, mixed with a gravity and quietude, that indicated it as not the resort of the gallants or debauchees of either party: it

looked what it was in fact, a house to which scholars and clergymen, and other persons of grave caste and temperate habits, resorted.

Thither Hubert bent his steps, and though, on his first entrance into the capacious and quiet eating-room, his dress and air appeared to create somewhat of surprise, no objection was offered, and, several clerical looking persons returning gravely his courteous salute, he took his seat at an unoccupied table and called for such refreshment as he needed.

He had not been seated long before he perceived that he had dropped into the midst of the very thing which he had entered the house in the hope of avoiding, viz., political discussion. At the table next to him sat several gentlemen, two of whom were apparently non-conformist clergymen, and one a clergyman of the Established Church; the fourth was a civilian. They were sitting over a moderate bowl of punch,

of which the clergymen partook very sparingly and the civilian scarcely at all.

The latter was a man of about forty, or perhaps less; dressed in black, neatly, but rather economically. He was of middle size, and, without being actually thin, bordering on the spare. His hair was light brown, and parted on his forehead, *à la Raphael*, hanging down over his shoulders, in a fashion which would have designated him as a Cavalier; but the gravity of his countenance, in the slightest possible degree approaching sourness, forbade the thought. His complexion had obviously been originally of a womanly fairness, and of a ruddy colour: it was still indeed fair, and not without colour, but it bore the unmistakable marks of severe study and the midnight vigil. A full large forehead, a prominent nose, thoughtful and apparently rather weak eyes, and full lips and chin, complete the picture of the individual whose clear and melodious voice Hubert now heard, pouring

forth in long, full, rotund sentences, as if he were talking blank verse, and without an atom of heat or fierceness, those high democratic doctrines which were utter abomination to him. Still the voice and the manner enchained him: like the wedding guest held by the glittering eye of the "Ancient Mariner," he was spell bound, and could not but listen. They were in full dispute about the topic of the day—the King's trial.

"Surely, Mr. Milton," said the Episcopalian, whom the others addressed as Doctor, "surely, you justify not the trial of the King! By what authority do the Commons alone—assuming that, in any case, it can be lawful for the people to sit in judgment on their Sovereign—by what authority, I ask, do the Commons alone pretend to try the King, who is alone the fountain of justice? But, more than that, has it ever been heard that a people could lawfully try and condemn to death him who reigns by

the choice of God, and is responsible to God alone."

"Nay," returned Milton, "you beg, reverend sir, the whole question. I admit not that kings reign by the choice of God, or are accountable to God alone: to say that, were to overturn all law and government; for if so, all oaths and covenants at coronations are but vain: for, if the King fears not God, as too many of them have not feared Him, then, indeed, we hold our lives and our estates by the tenure of his mere grace and mercy, and as from a God, and not a mortal magistrate."*

"Well," replied the Doctor, "let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the King is not accountable to God alone; still, by the law of this land, his crown and dignity are his inheritance, which none can disturb, whatever may have been his crimes:

* I need not tell the erudite reader, that portions of the doctrines here put in the mouth of John Milton, are culled from his learned and elaborate treatise on Government. Would that I could impart to the whole, the vigour of his masculine style.

if, indeed, he has committed any. And, at least, his right is as much a right of inheritance, as that of any subject to his estate. But if the King had committed crimes, still the people are not his judges, even if the people spoke through their lawful representatives, the Lords and Commons; for the King is as much an estate as the Lords and Commons, and how can either alone judge the other?"

"To say," retorted Milton, "that the King hath as good a right to his crown and dignity as any man to his inheritance, is to make the subject no better than the King's slave; his chattel or his possession, that may be bought and sold. But suppose it to be of right hereditary, still, if a subject may, for certain crimes, forfeit his inheritance to the King, so may a King, for crimes proportionate, forfeit his inheritance to the people. Thou sayest the people cannot be the King's judge; but I dare own, as part of my faith, that if there be a King

who hath committed great crimes against his people, the sword of justice is above him, in whose hand soever is found sufficient power to avenge such crimes: for if all human power to execute, not accidentally but intendedly, the wrath of God upon evil-doers be of God, as ye of the clergy do say, then that power, whether ordinary, or if that fail, extraordinary, so executing that intent of God, is lawful and not to be resisted."

"But then," rejoined the Doctor, "you must at least show that the King has committed such crimes. You must show that he has been a wicked tyrant, a despoiler of his people."

"I will not say," replied Milton, "that this King hath been so wicked a tyrant as to deserve *death*; I leave that to his judges. But that he hath done enough to deserve *trial*, I do say. Hath he not done all that in him lay to govern contrary to the established laws and usages of this land? Hath he not governed for years without authority

to levy money, and yet levied it without the consent of the Commons; nay, without a House of Commons at all? Hath he not enforced what he called loans, but which were in fact compulsory taxes? Hath he not done more? hath he not sought to force upon this Protestant people observances only consistent with a creed which the people abhor? which the law of the land, the acts of his own predecessors, had formally abolished?

“Ye say there is no law to try him for all this. But out of this grew war: war between the people and the King; and when that war has resulted in the defeat of the King, and he refuseth to yield to the just demands of the people—demands, in the beginning, amounting to no more than that the laws should be binding on the King as well as on the people—what course is open to the victor but the terrible *væ victis*? It is idle to apply the rules of peace to such a condition of the people. It is idle to talk

of lenity and forbearance and subordination, when all the bands of society have been loosened by the very acts of the King; who, victorious, would have doomed his rebellious subjects to death by the hundred; but who, vanquished, claims the immunity of his Royal rank. When society is thus disorganised, all the immunities that flow from the law, and the law only, are at an end; the people and the King are no longer people and King: they are, in truth, enemies, who have fought for supremacy; and the laws of war are the laws which the victor may lawfully apply."

"If the Parliament would openly avow that," answered the Doctor, somewhat hotly, "it would be intelligible at least, if not justifiable. But they pretend they are proceeding *judicially*. Judicially, in faith! The trial they are preparing is but a mockery of justice: for I repeat it, there cannot be a judicial trial, except by the law; and the law knows no courts but the King's courts."

“Thy doctrine,” answered Milton, still as calm and placid as if he were delivering a prelection to his pupils, “showeth a marvellous forgetfulness of the state of this nation. Thy hypothesis assumes that the laws are in force; but, in truth, we are still in a state of war, in which the laws are suspended, in which the elements of a Court cannot subsist; therefore, if *any* crime is to be tried and punished, it must be by a tribunal created *pro hâc vice*: a tribunal deriving its authority from the *necessity* of some new means of enforcing order, while the old means established by law are in abeyance. If the lawfulness of a court of justice is to be tried, by its judge and proceedings having the authority of the settled laws, *no* court of justice could exist lawfully in a time when the people and the Prince are at war together; for the judges would want the authority conferred by the appointment of the Prince. Shall we, then, say that, to add to the horrors of civil war,

men must carry to the full extent that principle, and say that, while the war lasts, no attempt may be made to constitute a tribunal for the punishment of evil-doers?

“This Court that thou speakest of as of no authority, is constituted by whatever authority remains in the land: by the authority of Parliament, which is the ruling power *de facto*. Wouldst thou deny that such a Court might lawfully try and condemn any common man for any common crime? wherefore, then, may it not lawfully try the King, if he hath committed crimes? I assume that a King doth not reign by right divine, but that the people have a right to determine how they will be governed; and that the King has no authority to govern but according to the laws: and then it follows that, if the King govern contrary to the laws, the people are absolved from their allegiance, and may lawfully depose him. And it seemeth to me to follow, also, that, if the acts by which he has compelled

them to depose him are such grave infractions of the law as to amount to crimes against the State, they may lawfully try him. That leaves the only question whether the acts of the King have amounted to such crimes; and that, as I have already said, I leave to the Court of Parliament that is to judge him: I am not his judge."

"So that, after all this fine discourse, Master Milton," said the Doctor, "thou leavest the whole matter unsettled; for, if all thou sayest were true, still the question is, whether the King has committed crimes? And what chance is there of that question being justly determined, when his judges are all as bitter republicans as thou art?"

Hubert had listened in silence, but not in patience; his blood had been gradually, during Milton's harangue, reaching boiling point; and when he had concluded, and the Doctor had finished his short and sarcastic reply, he rose suddenly and, advancing

to the table, addressed them in a voice almost trembling with passion.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “I am no casuist to bandy arguments with Mr. Milton, and I take not on myself to answer his logic. But this I say, he may prove to himself and to others, as much as he will, by learned argument, that the King’s trial is lawful; and if it ends, as all men know it is pre-judged that it *shall* end, in the King’s death, ye may call it a *sentence*, and, doubtless, ye will say it is the hand of God; but mark my words—and remember that if they come not from a dying man, they come from one who waits day and night on a dying man—mark my words; when ye have wrought this foul deed, your sophistry will be blown away as a cloud: the people will call it *murder*; and posterity, to the third and fourth generation, aye, so long as England shall be, will call it *murder*. I bid ye farewell.” So saying, he called the host, and paying his reckoning, hastily departed.

"A comely youth, but a hot," said Milton to the Doctor. "Dost thou know who he is?"

"I have seen him," replied the Doctor: "it is Hubert of Willingham, the King's friend and companion in his prison."

"Truly," replied Milton, "methought by his look he was a malignant; but he hath the boldness and the frankness of an English gentleman. They are a good race, even though they be malignant."

Hubert's intended recreation had thus terminated in an afternoon of irritation; as do, indeed, too often, the best planned measures of human enjoyment. But he could not help, as he walked back to the palace, pondering on the calm and dispassionate arguments of the grave scholar; and, though he could not, in feeling, assent to the doctrines, a glimmering of doubt came over his mind whether, in truth, his own opinions were so perfectly sound and reasonable as he had always believed them to be.

CHAPTER XI.

THE KING'S TRIAL.

ALL had been prepared for the King's trial; and on the 10th of January, 1649, early in the day, from the Water-gate at Whitehall, might be seen issuing a sad though imposing procession: first came the King, escorted by a guard of soldiers, and a little behind him, his faithful friend, Juxon. His hair was quite grey, and his countenance grave, even to melancholy; but he walked erect, and with a firm step, ever

and anon looking round him at the crowd gathered together to see the show.

At the foot of the stairs lay a barge, manned by eight stout watermen, who, as the King approached, rose up respectfully, uncovering their heads. The officer of the guard stepped forward and angrily ordered them to sit down, and put on their caps again; but the men, though they obeyed the order to take their seats, remained bareheaded: nor would anything induce them to cover themselves in Charles' presence. As he entered the barge, the guard closed round him, keeping off the people; and when he had taken his seat, the officer stepped in, and, taking the rudder ropes in his hand, steered for Westminster; silently and swiftly the men pulled to the landing-place at the foot of Westminster Bridge.

There the procession was met by a strong guard of horse and foot, and slowly they marched the Royal captive into the hall.

Gorgeous, yet grave, was the array of

that solemn ceremony, in which, for the first time, the old hall of the Norman Rufus was to receive a King arraigned by his people. Many strange and violent scenes had been enacted within its walls, but this was the most strange and violent of all.

The upper end, where now is the broad flight of steps leading up to the House of Commons, was arranged as a temporary court; and, in a chair of state, covered with crimson velvet, sat the President, John Bradshaw. A desk, something like the desks used by our modern judges, only of larger proportions and ruder fashion, was placed before him; beneath was a table covered with a rich carpet, and supplied with inkstands and writing materials, at which sat, in grave but full dress, the two clerks of the court; and, ranged down the sides of the hall, on benches covered with crimson cloth, sat the other members of the Court; Cromwell and the other great officers of the army at the head, and those

of less note below them. All were in their richest dresses, the officers in full uniform, and all covered; nor did any man move or uncover as the Royal prisoner entered, and was led to his seat by the sergeant-at-arms of the House of Commons.

The King looked round at his judges with a steady gaze, and then took his seat: then, after a few seconds, he again rose and surveyed the Court, and the galleries at the lower end of the Hall, filled with spectators, and among them many ladies, some masked; and again he sat down. Again a fearful silence of a few moments; and then the President directed the arraignment to be read.

A curious document was that arraignment, in which a people charged their King with treason and murder and tyranny, and with having taken up arms against the Commons of England. And, as these unwonted words fell upon the King's ear, he looked up and smiled, as if the thing was too ridiculous to

be more than a jest and a pageant; while from the gallery proceeded some groans and some hisses.

"Charles Stewart," said the President, in a loud clear voice, when the clerk had finished, "you have heard the charge brought against you by the Commons of England; what have you to say in reply?"

"I would first crave," answered the King (and as his voice was heard, all bent forward in eager silence), by whose authority I am here?"

"By that of the people," replied Bradshaw.

"I know of no authority," answered Charles, "to try men's lives in this realm, but that of the King."

"Sir," said the President in reply, "the authority of Parliament is greater than that of the King, and by that authority you are brought here."

"A Parliament," retorted Charles, "in England, is the King, the Lords, and the

Commons. I see here neither King nor Lords. *You* are not the Parliament of England; I deny your authority."

"*We* are satisfied," answered the President, with lowering brow, "of our authority. Dost thou make answer to the charge?"

"Nay," repeated the King; "I deny your authority as judges, and I will not answer ye."

The members of the Court conferred together in hurried whispers, and scraps of writing were passed to and fro between the President and the leading members. After a pause, Bradshaw rose.

"Guards," he said, "remove the prisoner. This Court is adjourned till Monday: and for thee, Charles Stewart," he said, addressing the King, "consider well if thou wilt not then answer. This Court is called together by the authority of the Parliament and the people; we are satisfied of our lawful power and authority, and shall proceed. Look to it well."

The King slightly bowed, and, rising, was again surrounded by guards, and returned to Whitehall as he had come.

Two more days was this ceremony repeated : twice was the King arraigned, and called upon to answer ; and twice did he haughtily deny the authority of the Court and refuse to plead.

In the meantime London was in a state of great excitement. The citizens collected in knots, and eagerly discussed the events of each day. And even then, at that, the eleventh hour, so divided were the feelings and opinions of men, that a well-organized movement might have rescued the King. But large bodies of soldiers patrolled the streets ; and those of the citizens who were friendly to the King—and they were then, moved by pity, the majority—though they muttered threats, and *spoke* with some boldness, were not allowed the opportunity of any concert ; even if they could have screwed their courage to the sticking place, suffi-

ciently to brave the onslaught of that iron-coated and iron-hearted army that had struck such terror into men's minds. Therefore, though they pitied the King, and were amazed and horror-struck, they did nothing.

On the third day, the King again standing mute, the President directed the trial to proceed; and then commenced the examination of witnesses. All was done orderly and in true judicial form; and, if the Court had authority, there could be nothing to be said against its proceedings. But had it authority? That is the question which has been asked from that day; and that is the question on which difference of opinion will probably exist as long as this land remains a kingdom.

The trial was over; the witnesses had proved that the King had appeared in arms against the people; and fifty other things, all as well known, and not requiring much evidence to prove them. This closed the case for the arraignment.

Then, at last—as usual, when it was too late—the King rose and spoke.

“Sir,” he said, “I have denied, and still deny, your authority, and I will not now debate the subject. I expect no justice at your hands: ye have prejudged me; and may God and the people, whose name you have usurped, forgive you. Yet, before you proceed, I desire to be heard by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled. To them I appeal: to them I have much to say in this matter, that concerneth the peace of this kingdom. This, and this only, will the King ask at your hands.”

The Court conferred, and retired to consider this matter; and at the end of an hour they returned, when the President announced that they could not grant the King’s request.

Then arose Bradshaw once more, and making a long and violent speech in recapitulating the evidence, pronounced the sentence of the Court—Death! And all the Court rose and lifted up their hands in assent.

Again the King rose in much agitation, exclaiming,

"Will you hear me, sir, a word?"

"Sir," replied Bradshaw, "judgment has been given and sentence passed; you cannot be heard."

"But one word?" cried the King.

"No, sir; we cannot hear you. Guards, remove the prisoner."

"Shame! shame on ye! Are ye men?" uttered a clear female voice from the gallery; ringing and echoing through the vaulted roof of the Hall, and electrifying the audience, who rose almost *en masse*.

"Fire!" shouted the officer of the guard: "fire into the gallery."

But the soldiers, hard as they were, paused, and looked towards Cromwell. He gave no sign; and the officer dared not repeat the order.

"But I demand to be heard," reiterated the King: I may be heard, even after sentence."

“Remove him!” almost screamed the President; and the guards, laying hands on the King, dragged him away, while he uttered incoherent exclamations, and endeavoured in vain to make himself heard.

Then was passed round the warrant for the King’s execution, a long scroll of parchment. One after another, the members of the Court signed it; first, Bradshaw, and then Cromwell, and then the rest. And as Cromwell took up the pen, to write the large bold signature of which the fac simile may be seen by the curious, on the printed copy of this famous document, he dipped it in the ink and jocosely marked the face of his neighbouring judge with a blotch of ink.

Was this done in the exuberance of that somewhat gross and boyish pleasantry in which Oliver is known occasionally to have indulged? Or was it that, to cover the agitation of his strong heart, he made a show of ribaldry so unfitting the occasion?

None can now guess; but that he did so forget the solemnity of the tragedy in which they were all engaged, is beyond question.

The Court then rose and broke up.

Charles was conducted by his guards back to Whitehall, and, as he passed through the doors of Westminster Hall, crowds were surrounding it, and, blocking up every avenue, and cries and groans of various kinds were heard among the multitude. Some pressed forward to try and kiss his hand; some called out for "Justice" and "Execution;" but the great body of the people stood silent, amazed, stupified. Even among the soldiers of the guard at the doors, some seemed touched with pity; and a serjeant of tall and athletic form and grave, weather-beaten countenance, stepped forward as the King passed, saying,

"God bless you, sir!"

For which act of loyalty the officer in command struck him, with a curse.

“Nay,” said the King, “methinks the punishment exceeds the offence;” and, looking kindly at the soldier, he passed on.

CHAPTER XII.

DEEPER AND DEEPER STILL.

CAPTAIN SLASHER, or Joshua Sleek, and his friend Zerubbabel, and others of the same set we have described in Chapter II., were reunited at their orgies at the "Three Kings."

The wine-cup was passing rapidly round, and loud and boisterous mirth rung fast and furious. But now their politics were no longer so indifferent as before; the tide had set too strongly one way: they were no

longer open to *conviction*. Most of them had been *persuaded*, by reasons — golden reasons — acceptable to their intellectual faculties; and it was now all for the Republic, and down with the King.

“So the trial has come off, beloved,” said Joshua: “the man they called King is caged up like a caught lion, and the voice of the saints, to whom it has pleased the Lord to commit the care of this realm, hath gone forth against him, hum!”

“Thou twangest it off well, friend Joshua,” replied Zerubbabel: “the General himself could not have done it better.”

“Hush,” interposed another of the company: “speak ye not evil of princes and rulers; it is neither godly nor safe.”

“I speak nought against the General,” replied Zerubbabel; “verily, on the contrary, I profess I seek but to imitate his Lordship’s gifts.”

“*Thou* imitate his gifts!” exclaimed a tall fellow at the end of the table; “thou

mightest as well try to imitate the wart on his nose."

"Come, come," said Joshua, "it is dangerous to talk too much of a great man; stone walls, they say, have ears, and I counsel none to talk too lightly of the General, if he values his ears."

"Eh! what, has he given *thee* a touch of the rough side of his tongue, friend Captain?" retorted the tall man.

"Mind thine own business," replied Joshua, "and drink thy liquor; and give us a song, if thou canst not keep thy tongue from wagging about thy betters."

"Verily I sing not carnal songs," responded the tall man; "but, if thou wilt, I will sing a psalm."

"What say you, beloved?" said Joshua, addressing the company, with a sanctimonious leer; "shall we seek the Lord in psalmody, or shall we have up the dice?"

"The dice, the dice!" exclaimed a chorus of voices: "the voice of our brother is

sweet to the ear, and his psalms are choice; but we can hear plenty of them all the day long when he is at the guard-house. What sayest thou, Ahab?"

"Verily," replied the tall soldier; "I profess, I play not oft; yet a cast with the dice is not sinful to *us*: yea, to the godly nought is sinful; wherefore, friend Zerubbabel, pass the sack, and I will wrestle with thee even at the carnal games of the men of Belial."

"The judges have adjudged the King to death, is it not so?" asked Joshua, addressing himself to Zerubbabel.

"Of a surety, friend, yea," replied that worthy.

"And will there be a rescue, thinkest thou?"

"Wherefore dost thou ask?" rejoined Zerubbabel.

"Listen," returned Joshua; "if there is a rescue, there will be feud and battle even in the streets of London."

"And what then?"

"What then! when a city is sacked, what then! Is there not plunder and booty? dost thou understand?"

"I do understand thee, Joshua: thou art, indeed, a reckless villain."

Joshua laughed loudly. "Thou art a pretty knave!" he retorted. "Thou wouldst rob thy dying father of his purse, an' thou couldst do it quietly; and *thou* dost affect to be pitiful."

"I love not blood, Joshua," was Zerubbabel's answer, "and I love not danger. A share of the spoil of the Egyptians I despise not; but I would not do deeds of cruelty for it, as thou wouldst."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Joshua, "a man who lives by his wits must make his wits help him to live; and there is little I would not do for a good pocketful of gold pieces."

"Thou mayest have an opportunity, then, soon," said Zerubbabel. "Men say the

executioner hath fled, and that none will take the office; and the stroke of the axe that will take off the King's head will be worth its weight in gold."

"Ha!" exclaimed Joshua, while a gleam of fierce cupidity lighted up his scowling eyes, though at the same time he shuddered: "sayest thou? Is there no man that can be found for that office?"

"None," answered Zerubbabel; "wouldst thou take it?"

"I shall wait till I am asked, beloved," replied Joshua.

"Then *I* ask thee; and I ask thee under commission—wilt thou pledge thyself to take it, if offered? Remember there will be danger as well as dishonour."

"Dishonour!" cried Slasher, with a bitter tone, as the early years of his life passed before his eyes rapidly, like a bright vision of happiness departed for ever: the years when he was still unstained by crime, untainted by foul dishonour. "Dishonour! what is that

to thee and me, and such as thee and me? And danger! what is the danger?"

"Simply, beloved, the chance of being torn to pieces by the people, should they rise, and the certainty of being cut down by the nearest trooper, if thou dost thy work slovenly. But the price, Joshua, is great; yea, it is much gold, even five hundred gold pieces."

"Why dost thou not take it thyself, Zerubbabel?"

"Said I not, that I am not a man of blood? To speak with thee in all sincerity, I need not the five hundred gold pieces; and I blacken not my soul for nought."

"Who commissioned thee to sound me?" asked Joshua.

Zerubbabel whispered in his ear something, at which Joshua shook with obvious terror; but he answered,

"I will accept it. Oh, my God!" exclaimed the wretch—calling, for this once, in

earnest on the name he so often blasphemed —“that it should come to this! But there is no help for it: it is disgrace, or starvation, or worse.”

“Thou dost accept, then?” said Zerubbabel.

“I do: thou mayest pledge me.”

“Remember,” said Zerubbabel, “that thou breathest not one word: not one name: if but a syllable escape thee, be sure thou wilt not escape him.”

“I know it,” replied Joshua. “If this thing comes to pass, England shall know me no more: I will to the Continent, and there——”

Aye, there! what wilt thou do, Alfred Slasher? what will be the close of that life which thy God gave thee pure, which thy mother cherished with a mother’s love, which thy father opened for thee with a bright future? Thou wilt shrink from the eye of every honest man! thou wilt bear on thy forehead the eternal brand of Cain! thou wilt

read in every eye a curse: every one of thy gold pieces will seem to thee defiled with blood; and, like Judas, thou wilt, perchance, end thy wretched life in an agony of remorse by thine own hand: if, indeed, thou hast courage for that last crime.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONFLICT.

THE trial of the King was over, and sentence had been passed. But a trial was yet to be passed through by him, who, if not the chief mover in the tragedy, was, at least, a principal actor in it; and one whose nod might possibly still have averted the fate of the King.

When Cromwell retired to his apartments in Whitehall, after the trial, the stern self-possessed look which all men had seen on him in Westminster Hall was gone. Pale,

languid, yet restless, he paced up and down his apartment in great agitation, ejaculating at times broken sentences, indicative of the struggle that was going on between his stern will and his kinder nature. A low tap was heard at his door, and not waiting for an answer, his daughter Elizabeth—his beloved daughter—slowly entered, and, throwing herself on her knees before him, clasped his hands.

“My father, my father!” she cried, “oh! let not this dreadful thing come to pass. You are powerful; you are all-powerful: they dare not gainsay *you*. Bethink you, my father, that on you—on you alone, will this crime be cast. Bethink you how hard it is for one who has been King of this land, to die, and to die by the hands of a common executioner. Have mercy, and save his life!”

Oliver looked at her, but moved not: every muscle in his face was swollen and quivering with emotion, and large tears

thy hands with crime. God knows how freely mine should be given to prevent it! But, oh! if thou wouldst, my father, but let thy own kind heart plead for the King, this crime might yet be averted. Rest not on thy maxims of state: rest not on what ye men of politics call the necessities of the kingdom. Commit not crime; and leave it to God to avert future war and bloodshed. He alone can do it: in *his* good time he *will* do it."

Cromwell was much agitated; and, disengaging himself, he walked up and down the room rapidly. What a conflict was then going on within him! Clearly *then* he saw, that on him alone would rest the weight of the King's death. His eye pierced into futurity, and he saw that generations unborn, passing by the more ignoble instruments of the people, would hold *his* name, *his* memory, responsible for this act. Was it, then, a crime, or was it a stern necessity?—the decree of God in his inscrutable

government of human affairs? Then he saw clearly, in his mind's eye, that if the King did not die, there would be war, endless war, in the land; and all that the men with whom he thought and acted had struggled for, would be overturned.

He had brought himself to believe that he was but an instrument in the hand of God: that it was God's will that the King should die. Yet, now it was to be, his *heart* recoiled from it. A dozen times in the space of a few short minutes was he on the point of yielding to his daughter's prayers and tears; and a dozen times, he felt that it could not be. Policy, fanaticism, stern will—call it what you please—or was it, indeed, the will of Providence?—at last prevailed. The decree had gone forth: he could not, he would not, alter it. And now, with cold, calm, and almost stony countenance, he turned to his daughter.

"Elizabeth Cromwell," he said, "I may not yield to thy prayers. The people and

the Parliament have doomed the King to death. The safety of this land requires it. Leave me. I will hear no more: I will say no more."

His daughter knew by her father's countenance that all further adjuration was useless; that his resolve was fixed, and no human power could turn it. And now, in her turn, something of her father's sternness, something of her father's fire, animated her. She rose, and, looking at him with an eye whose cold glitter held him, even him, for a moment spell-bound, she said slowly and solemnly, as if she were speaking rather from some inward prompting than of her own free will and thoughts:

"It is well: I have done my duty to God and to thee. Ruler of England thou wilt be; but peace thou wilt not have. The heart of the people will be severed from thee; the heart of thy daughter will know thee no more; and the hand of God will press on thee, and on those who, with

thee, have done this deed. Farewell, my father, farewell!" she added in a mournful tone. She ceased; and, before Oliver could recover himself again to speak to her, she had left the room.

"Is it even so?" he said to himself. "Must I bear the curse of my beloved child, too? Oh, God! oh, God! if it be indeed *Thy* will that this life should be saved, let Thy voice speak to me!" and he threw himself on his knees, and spent a long time in earnest, passionate prayer.

What passed in his mind, none can tell; but history tells us that he did not, in act, relent.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXECUTION.

It is a trite but true remark, that men in the aggregate are very like sheep: where the bell-wether goes, there will the flock follow; but if there be no bell-wether, they will saunter about hither and thither listlessly, or stand still in masses, not knowing what to do, or which way to go. There never was a more mistaken notion than that which dogmatically proclaims that all men are self-willed, and like to have their own way. Yes; if you tell any mass of men

that you *desire* them to go to the right, they will forthwith *desire* to go to the left. Let them see that you want to impress *your will* upon them, and the spirit of antagonism will rouse up *their will*; and they oppose you because you shock their own self-will. So if men know beforehand what they have to do, if they have *made up their minds* to do it, as the expression is—that is, if, in their secret hearts, they have pledged *their own self-will*—then, indeed, they will, with indomitable perseverance, justify their own secret will in its own fond eyes, and stick to their task. But let there be anything to be done, that is, in its character in the least degree undefined, and who ever saw a crowd of human beings stir, or do anything but gape and wonder, till one or a few leading minds show them the way? Let but one man go forward and show the way, no matter which way, and, one by one, they follow him, till all, *en masse*, do what their leader does, as if drawn

by a magnetic attraction: till then, they stir not.

Thus, of all the thousands and tens of thousands of self-willed Englishmen who assembled on the 31st of January, 1649, to witness the execution of King Charles, perhaps not one-tenth desired his death; probably more than one-half execrated it, and, for the moment, earnestly desired to avert it. Yet they stood in front of the scaffold, gaping, open-mouthed, turning their eyes, now on the masses of soldiery surrounding it, and lining all the avenues to Whitehall; now on the dark and crape-covered scaffold itself, and the block and glittering axe, and the tall gaunt form of a man standing, masked, a little behind the fatal block.

Many were the curses, deep if not loud, vented on that man; and many were the inquiries, "Who is he? it is not the regular headsman." Some thought he was a foreigner; and the hatred of the crowd waxing greater on that account, missiles

began to fly, and the executioner, trembling, sought shelter in the recesses of the building, against which the scaffolding was erected. None seemed to know him; but there was one in the crowd, and that a female, leaning on the arm of an aged and distinguished looking man, who recognised, with a shudder, the well-known figure, disguised as it was.

The final hour struck; and slowly the King came forth, attended by his faithful Juxon; with whom, as he advanced, he was in earnest conversation. When the King had reached the fatal spot, close to the block, he addressed himself eagerly to those who surrounded it, earnestly arguing that it was not he who had commenced the war, and seeking, even in these troubled moments, to convince his hearers, by precise proof, that he had been throughout in the right. Strange infatuation of the self-will of his race, that could find consolation, even at such a time, in believing and endeavouring to persuade

others, that *he* had never been in the wrong.

A few short minutes for prayer; a few short sentences exchanged between him and Juxon; and the King, taking off his cloak and his order of St. George, and giving them to the Bishop, knelt down and bowed his head on the block. The tall gaunt man stepped forward, and, swinging aloft fiercely the glittering axe, with one blow struck off the King's head; then, holding it up, he cried out with a loud voice, "This is the head of a traitor!" and, flinging it on the platform, sprung back, and was out of sight in a moment."

Then, at last, when concert in action was no longer of use,—then, at last, under the influence of passion, the people acted in unpremeditated concert. A yell of execration burst forth. Despite the soldiers, the people rushed forward to the scaffold: hundreds scrambled up upon it; and the executioner would have been torn in pieces by the in-

furiated mass had he not already made a precipitate retreat. Such a rush, manned but a quarter of an hour sooner, might have turned the tide of public feeling, and, even then, rescued Charles from death. But it was too late. And still the people had no leaders: they wavered, and no man knew what to do; and, therefore, nothing was done: and soon the soldiers cleared the scaffold and the streets, and all was over.

But if none knew how to *act* to save the King, there were not wanting mourners; and among them none mourned more truly and bitterly than Sir John Willingham and Rachel, who were in the crowd to witness the last moments of the unhappy Prince. Sir John, when he heard of the King's condemnation, had determined to go to London to see the last of his Sovereign; and, with Rachel, he stood in the crowd, bareheaded, till all was over; then he turned slowly and without uttering a word; and, leaving London, regained his

horses and servants, and rode back to Willingham.

Our tale is concluded. — The convulsions of a people, the overthrow of a constitution, and the slaughter of a King, are themes too solemn to bear being followed by aught of trivial and domestic life: yet, ere we cast aside the pen that we have wielded, truly with a trembling hand, we must account to our readers for the remaining fate of those who have mingled in the political drama we have sought to describe.

Hubert, who, on the King's death, had been suffered to go unmolested whither he would, rejoined his father and Rachel at Willingham; and, shortly afterwards, his marriage with Rachel took place. It was a quiet marriage: not "graced," as the newspapers would now say, "by the presence of a large assemblage of nobility and gentry." The spirits of the Royalists were too much crushed to bear aught of display or pageantry;

and the Willinghams would have thought it sacrilege to put on the garb of gaiety, and to rejoice in bridal revelry, while the remains of their King were scarcely cold in the grave.

Elijah Gideon was offered, by Cromwell, a commission in the army; but he declined it, and left the army altogether: he had served, he said, long enough, and desired peace and quiet. But, in truth, his heart revolted from the King's death; he could not bear the recollection of the fearful deed: the King's last look of kindness, when he had passed from Westminster Hall to the scaffold, was graven deep on his heart, and he no longer gloried in his banner. He and Margery were united shortly after his retirement, and taking a farm on the estate of Sir John, who gladly gave them one of his best, they reared produce, both human and agricultural; and, in due course, stocked the land with a goodly share of corn and oil, and with stalwart sons and blooming daughters.

The Protector, who, firm in his seat after the battle of Worcester, applied himself, with what vigour history tells us, to the internal government and external defence of the country, meddled not with the Willinghams; but left them—as, indeed, he did all others who had the sense to remain quiet—to enjoy peace and repose. They lived in the country in entire seclusion. Hubert farmed, hunted, and read; and in the society of Rachel, and the education of his children, found happiness: as much, at least, as it is given to man to enjoy.

And still, occasionally, would he have the now matronly Margery and her husband and their children, to spend a few days as a holiday at Willingham, and bring them into his study to talk over old times; and then, while the children of the lord and the children of the tenant were playing together with that freedom and equality which was, in the olden time, known between the truly high-born and their de-

pendants, would he read to Rachel and Margery some of those bright and lovely outpourings of the spirit of Shakspeare, or Tasso, or Ariosto, with which, in days long past, he had, unconsciously, so nearly poisoned the peace of Margery: and, as she heard the well remembered passages, she fondly turned to her husband, and, pressing his hand, and caressing the curly heads of her children, blessed God in her secret heart that the charmed poison had passed by her lips, leaving behind it only the memory of its fragrance.

After a few years, also, Colonel Frankland returned, and was permitted to take peaceable possession of his estate; and, in the happiness of his daughter, and the love of his grandchildren, he found, at last, rest from the weary struggle of his previous life.

Of Slasher nothing more was heard. He was believed to have fled to the Continent, immediately after the King's execution, and

there to have lived and died in obscurity and misery. The only faint trace of him that could be found, was a rumour that an Englishman had died in one of the convents in Switzerland, who confessed, on his death-bed, that his hand had struck the blow that had so horrified all Europe.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

SEVERAL years of the Protectorate had passed over the heads of the persons who have figured in this story. And on the occasion of the christening of an additional scion to the House of Willingham, a large party was collected at Willingham Hall to do honour to this increase of the English gentry. Sir John was now verging on extreme old age ; still, to use the common, but expressive, old English word, he was *hearty*, but bowed down with years, with a head

as white as snow, and an eye beginning to lose its lustre. The time for vociferous enjoyment had passed with him; but, sitting quietly in his arm-chair, his eye roamed over the assembled group of his children and his grandchildren, and the guests who had met to do honour to his family; and now and then, as some merry peal of laughter burst forth from the throng of youthful guests, at any joke that was passed amongst them, a tear stood in the old man's eye: not a tear of sorrow, but a tear of thankfulness that he had been permitted to remain so long and to witness, before his departure from this life, more happiness than, in the throes of the Civil War, he had ever hoped to see. It was the *nunc dimittis* of the old man at peace with himself — at peace with the world.

Colonel Frankland was there, now a grave man of advanced age, still with the look of one who, if need were, could draw the sword; but still more with the air of one

who would, in council, draw from the stores of an experience, not yet paralyzed by senility, the treasures of accumulated wisdom.

And Hubert and his sweet Rachel, in the prime of life—tamed down from the over-boiling exuberance of youthful passion and enthusiasm, yet still abounding in gaiety and that light-hearted joviality which is the appanage of a middle age following an honest and enthusiastic youth—took part in the sports of the younger members of the company; none were more ready than they for the merry dance, and the joking repartee, and the jovial quaffing of toasts to the healths that the courtesy of the guests proposed.

But enjoyment has, as we all know, a limit, and merriment exhausts itself at length; and, after the usual amount of feasting and gaiety, while the youths and maidens were resting from their more joyous exertations in gentle flirtation, or in singing some of the madrigals of Purcell and the other good

old English composers, previous to withdrawing to dress for the evening masque and dance, the elders of the party collected in knots, and betook themselves to quiet and grave talk. Agriculture and parish affairs, as is usual in country residences, opened the conversation; but gradually, as is also usual, it turned from those channels into politics, and the old Knight led the way with somewhat of his pristine fire.

“Ah! Frankland,” he said, “if I could but live to see the old times restored, and the King with his own again, then, indeed, I should die happy: though I complain not. The Protector (faugh, the word still sticks in my throat) is a wise and prudent man; and were he but of the right blood——” here he was seized with a fit of coughing, which deprived the company of the sequel to his opening; for when he had recovered, the ideas had fled from his brain, and he could say no more.

“My old friend,” replied Frankland, as soon as he saw that Sir John was once more capable of listening, “what wouldst thou have? Thou talkest of the right blood as if we were all an appanage of some particular family, a goodly inheritance given by God to the House of Stewart. There is but one God, but is there but one King? Cannot a nation be great and flourishing and happy, except it be blessed with the rule of a man whose principal claim is, that he is the son of the man who ruled before him, and the grandson of the man who ruled again before him? Look at this land! has it ever been greater with foreigners, or more flourishing at home than it is now? Is it not better to have one who is not King, but knows the art of governing, than one who is King, but knoweth nought of king-craft?”

“It may be so, Frankland; yet I cleave to the old stock: and I like not your Protector, great and wise though he is, I must

confess. 'Besides, after all, what hath he done? He hath put the King to death, for liberty's sake, ye say: are we more free now than we were before?"

"*We*, perhaps, the *gentry*, are not so free," replied Frankland, "or rather we are not so *dominant*; but the merchants and the farmers and the artisans are more free. True, the Protector keepeth a tight hand over those who will not accept his government, and who struggle and plot to restore the King; but thou, my friend, and I, and hundreds of other gentlemen who have been content to obey the Government *de facto*, and to cultivate our lands in peace, have we not peace? have we been molested?"

"No, surely we have not, Frankland; but it galleth me to think that a man who was but yesterday nothing,—a farmer and a brewer, should lord it over the nobles and gentry of England, while their lawful Sovereign pineth in exile.

“But, sir,” said Hubert (who, in his retirement, had pondered much over the events of the war, and over the doctrines that he had heard from the lips of Milton, and had afterwards studied in his writings), “after all, when the land is well governed; when trade and agriculture flourish; when justice is rigidly administered, and we are respected and feared by foreign nations, is it not better to abide by such a government, with all its faults, than to seek again a civil war, that we may set up a King who, after all, may not govern so well as Cromwell? I grant that he is a usurper: so was Henry IV. What, indeed, is our whole history, but a series of usurpations? And yet our fathers have ever acted on the doctrine that a good government, *de facto*, whatever its origin, should be supported, rather than fight for a broken dynasty that may disappoint expectation when restored.”

“Out upon thee, Hubert!” exclaimed

the old man with some warmth. "Art thou turning republican?"

"Not republican, sir: we are not now a republic, nor anything like a republic. Oliver is, in truth, King, though he beareth not the title; and his acts are right kingly. Hath he not given to our merchant seamen an impetus, the issue of which no man can foresee? In my day-dreams sometimes I fancy I see the wide seas of the whole world covered with English ships, by thousands, carrying with them the trade and the power of England from the east to the west, and from the north to the south. When, again, have we seen the law more equally administered than it is under the rule of this Cromwell? Thou knowest well that he hath maintained the learned and excellent Hale in his place as Chief Justice, though the judge thwarted him openly, and discharged a jury because he deemed it packed in the Protector's interest. Have we seen the like of that, since the days of

Harry the Fifth? No. Would that the King could have maintained his authority, and I would have served him to the best of my poor ability; but we failed: and now we have a Ruler who doth his work. The English flag is everywhere respected; the English trade is everywhere protected; and never, in the history of our country were the merchant, the artisan, and the peasant, more secure that what they had sown they should reap: that the bread they had cast upon the waters should return to them sevenfold. Could I feel certain that the King could be restored without disturbing this state of England, God knows I would hail his return with all my heart and with all my soul; but I have seen enough of civil war to be satisfied with peace and plenty, even with some faults in the Ruler, whatever be the hand that rules, rather than seek an uncertain future through the agonies of another revolution."

“Well, well,” said the old man, “ye are all young compared with me; and new ideas may sit lightly upon you. I am too old to forget the principles which, in my youth, were a creed. God grant that it may all end well: and, meanwhile, let us enjoy the blessings that are placed within our reach. But enough of grave discourse; for here cometh Margery to announce that we must retire, that she may clear the hall for the masque;” and rising, and leaning on the arms of Hubert and Frankland, the old Knight withdrew with his friends to arrange their dress for the festivities of the evening.

And a merry evening it was, though England did groan under the iron rule of that stern Dictator, who, in the belief of many of his day, (and, one might fancy from their wild expressions of hatred, of some even at this day) never ate less than a broiled baby for his breakfast, and when, he died, was carried away in a whirlwind by the devil.

And Cromwell himself—the great spirit that has spread its gigantic shadow over these pages, as it did over the heart and mind of all England in the seventeenth century—were not the prophetic words of his daughter fulfilled? Well and vigorously he governed: glory and strength and fame and riches he brought to England: for never, in truth, under the greatest and best of our kings, was England more powerful, more respected, more flourishing, than under the rule of Cromwell—King in fact, though not in name. Great and wise measures he originated, of which we are even now reaping the fruit; and in no instance more than in the growth of that vast mercantile navy, which is the child of his measures. And many things he projected, which were too far in advance of the civilisation of the age to take root *then*, but which have *since* been brought forward as new political inventions. Glory he had, and fame and power; but peace he had not: the hand of the

assassin was ever threatening him. The gentry stood sullenly aloof. The people, though profiting by his firm and good government, were cold to him: and even his own much-loved daughter, alienated from him in affection, showed him filial reverence, but no love; and on her own death-bed, bitterly reproached him with the death of the King, and struck his heart a blow from which he never fully recovered. In solitary greatness he *reigned*—for reigning it was, though he bore not the title of King; and none can read the story of his life, and not see that Oliver the farmer was happier than Oliver the Protector.

Yet deem not, reader, that I mean to denounce ambition as wickedness; or, presumptuously to intimate that the hand of Providence afflicted Cromwell as a punishment. I mean but to point to this one great example, as a beacon to those who are ambitious; that they must not expect *happiness* from the realisation of their dreams

of ambition. Ambitious men must be; without them the world would not move, but stagnate into decrepitude and rottenness: but let him whom God has cursed with an ambitious heart, that he may work as an instrument in the great scheme of human civilisation, not dream that he can do the fierce and bustling work appointed for him, and yet enjoy that happiness which is reserved only for the meek and quiet spirit.

Napoleon used to complain that he had “une humeur acre qui coule dans les veines, mais sans quoi l'on ne gagne pas de batailles.” Such is the poison that runs in the veins of all ambitious men: and let the ambitious man rest satisfied, that if action and greatness are his instinct, rest and peace, without which there is no happiness, are not *his* portion in life.

HISTORICAL NOTE

ON THE CHARACTER OF CROMWELL AND THE CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR.

THE period from which I have selected the events embodied in the work now offered to the public, has always appeared to me one of the most interesting in our history.

The Civil War was the bridge over which the English people passed, from *feudal* to *free and representative* institutions, and from *ecclesiastical domination* to a *Parliamentary Church*. The old political and ecclesiastical institutions had, indeed, received many blows, and were tottering, long before the Civil

War; and its germs may be traced to a period preceding it by many generations: but it was in the convulsion of the Civil War, that those old institutions found their grave.

I do not mean, of course, to assert that, absolutely up to the breaking out of that revolution, feudalism and ecclesiastical tyranny were rampant; nor that, from and after it, feudal and ecclesiastical tyranny were totally merged in free institutions: for, beyond all doubt, feudal, as well as ecclesiastical tyranny, had been long before the Civil War much modified and softened, as compared with what they had been originally, or even two centuries before the war. And so, for many generations after the Civil War, much of the spirit of the old institutions still affected the political *status* of the English nation. What the Civil War really did, was to deny and destroy the *principle* of feudal and ecclesiastical domination, and to affirm and set up the *principle* of popular and personal freedom, both political and religious.

In that lay its merit, and its claim upon the gratitude of unborn generations.

The character of the greatest actor in that great drama has, I venture to think, been in general grievously misunderstood; or, if not misunderstood, misrepresented in England. Until the researches of Dr. Vaughan and Mr. Carlyle showed almost conclusively the contrary to be the fact, Englishmen, brought up from the cradle to believe in Hume and Clarendon and their copyists and abridgers, generally assumed, both in books and in the private conversations of society, that Cromwell was a mere hypocrite, a mere ambitious self-seeker; who, from the beginning, had formed and steadily carried out a plan for aggrandising himself, and himself alone. It has too often been assumed that *he* made the revolution for his own purposes; that *he* might have prevented it; and might have preserved at once peace to England, and the throne to Charles.

All these assumptions are, I apprehend, unfounded in fact.

The charge of hypocrisy (if hypocrisy means what I understand it to mean, viz., professing religion when one does not feel it) is, I think, blown to atoms by the private correspondence of Cromwell, brought to light by the industry and learned research of the two writers above named. Cromwell's most private correspondence, consisting of letters written, from the very beginning of his career, to his wife, his children, and his friends, breathes the same religious fervour, the same reliance upon Providence, the same constant "seeking of the Lord," in every affair of life, trivial as well as important, that are to be found in his public despatches and speeches; and for which he has been so liberally bespattered, by posterity, with the charge of hypocrisy.

Now, no man is always—no man, indeed, *can be* always—on stilts; and men are not

habitually on stilts in the letters that they write to their friends on all manner of occasions. If Cromwell had not been sincere in his religious fervour, it would be quite impossible that such a correspondence as that dug out of the dust by Mr. Carlyle, should not give some evidence of the insincerity: but, from the beginning to the end of it, it contains no such evidence.

With regard to the other alleged portion of Cromwell's character—his self-seeking ambition: that appears to me, also, to have been grossly exaggerated, to say the least, in the prevailing opinions of Englishmen. That Cromwell was ambitious, no one can doubt: what man *ever* does great things who is not ambitious? But that Cromwell's ambition was not purely selfish, is, I think, shown by the history of his times.

Fortune, it is clear, he did not seek: in that he was like the younger Pitt; he neither enriched himself nor his family; though he might have heaped riches on

both. *Power* he assumed, it is true ; but he assumed it almost of necessity : he assumed it, because there was work to be done that required the leading of a daring head and a vigorous hand ; and there was none but himself who dared to lead. Cromwell might, indeed, well have used the expression attributed both to William of Orange and Napoleon I. : “ J’ai trouvé une couronne dans la boue, et je l’ai ramassée.”

When in power, Cromwell’s government was not selfish ; it was intensely national : *English*, and not *personal*. He attempted no foreign conquests for his own glory : he did not even attempt, as Napoleon did, to create for himself any extraordinary rank as ruler. Content with the actual authority of Protector, with its unbrilliant and uninviting name and appanages, he devoted his government to the peace and greatness of England. And at no antecedent period of history was England ever governed with so steady an administration of the laws ; at no period,

before or since, has England, in her foreign relations, ever held her own with greater fame and power.

That Oliver's rule was more that of a *Sovereign* than of a *Consul* is not to be denied; had it not been so, it would not have suited the English nation. But it was even-handed, if stern; and the man, who, possessed of nearly absolute power, retained in his office, in such an age, a Judge who had braved him, *because* he was a just and a learned Judge,* was, if a tyrant at all, a tyrant of a very different mould from his predecessor, the first James, or his successors, the second Charles and James.

To place the character of Oliver Cromwell in a point of view more true to history than that in which it has been the fashion to contemplate it, has been one, if not the principal, of the objects that I have had in view in the preceding pages; and,

* I allude to the well-known anecdote relating to Sir Matthew Hale.

if towards this piece of historical justice, I shall have contributed, even in a very small degree, it will be a reward for some pains and labour.

The causes of the Civil War were twofold: the one remote, and to be traced through events long preceding it; the other proximate—the unfitness of the King to rule a strong-headed nation in a state of transition.

I will first consider the remote causes of the Civil War; and for that purpose it is necessary to inquire shortly into the principles that regulate the political convulsions of states; and we must carefully distinguish between an insurrection or a mere *emeute*, and a revolution.

The temporary oppressions of a tyrannical sovereign, of a nobility, or a priesthood, may produce a rising of the people, a massacre, perhaps even a change of dynasty; or, on the other hand, it *may* happen that the acts

of a few turbulent spirits will inflame the people without any sufficient cause, and urge them into an insane insurrection. But there the affair will end in either case, if the elements of power have not changed hands: the privileges of the ruling classes of society may be thus trampled upon for a time, and lie in abeyance; but the tumult over, they will reappear and resume nearly their old places.

This was seen in the famous Neapolitan insurrection conducted by Massaniello. There we find the overthrow of a strong government by a rude fisherman at the head of a mere mob. The oppressions of the Government had been, in truth, excessive, and of a character to bear chiefly on the physical wants of the people. Hence the latter rose in fury, and, for a time, carried all before them; dictating to their masters, and exacting rights and immunities which, had the people been able to maintain them, would have immeasurably raised their condition in

the political scale. But as the people owed their success, not to any real and stable increase of their internal strength, but to the irresistible energy produced by sudden and momentary excitement, so they were incapable of preserving the power and advantages they had acquired; and, at the end of a revolution of a few months, they relapsed into their original subjection.

Again, in our own history, we have an instance of a revolution attempted by the populace in the fourteenth century. This approached more nearly to the character of a real revolution; for, though the immediate cause of the outbreak was merely a tax that pressed most heavily on the poor, and the insolence of a collector of the obnoxious impost, yet the disposition to attack the privileges and tyranny of the nobles had been growing for a considerable period. In Wat Tyler's insurrection, the people were at first masters, and extorted from the Government the abolition of feudal slavery and some other

immunities. But for such great changes, the nation at large was not ripe; the people were not then possessed of sufficient real power, to preserve the station they would have obtained by so great a change in their conventional position: they were not yet capable of so much freedom as they conquered. Hence we find that, in this case, as in that of the Neapolitan insurrection, the immediate result of the enterprise went little beyond striking some degree of terror into the rulers; and the people ended as they had begun, serfs and bondsmen.

Now these were instances of mere *insurrection*, or but little more, which might well be produced by momentary causes; such as sudden discontent, inflamed by a few wild and exciting harangues. But a *revolution* means something more: it means a great and permanent change in the rights and relative political positions of classes and bodies. And, though the precise moment of its actual explosion may be accelerated or

retarded by the writings or acts of a few individuals—though it may, in its progress, be guided by such influences—it never is, or can be, so *produced*.

The source of revolutions is some change wrought in the *real* position of the different classes of a society, by the force of time and circumstances; and the resistance offered by some of those classes to a corresponding change in their *conventional* position. By the *real position* of any class, I mean that degree of substantial weight and force which it possesses, consequent upon its possession of wealth, courage, and mental ability. And by *conventional position*, I mean the rank and political rights or privileges assigned to it by law or custom.

Now, if we refer to the history of revolutions we shall find that, almost without exception, they have proceeded from some great derangement of the social organization, which caused, or left, *authority* to be exercised by those men, or classes, who had

ceased to possess a proportionate share of *real power*; and if, at the same time, we refer to the principle which governs the creation and permanent existence of political power, we shall see that, in effect, such a derangement of the proportions of the political body *must* always ultimately generate a revolution, if the conventional position of classes be not quietly altered to meet it.

The foundation of all sovereignty is physical or mental force, or both, in the Ruler; and the foundation of all obedience in the people, is the avowed or implied acknowledgment of its necessity or expedience. Hence arise all distinctions of class, and the existence, in most countries (where any form of government is settled), of a *superior class* of some sort, in whom the chief rule resides.

So long as *force*, or real as well as conventional superiority, resides in that class, so long do the people yield obedience without much murmur: not only because they feel that resistance would be impossible by

reason of their own want of strength; but because they feel confidence in their leaders, and are conscious that, in return for their obedience, they obtain protection and guidance. But if the rulers, or ruling classes, suffer those beneath them to advance in wealth and intelligence, or in any way to acquire political strength, without themselves taking corresponding steps; if, in other words, they allow their own actual *force of superiority* to diminish, and yet continue to exercise its privileges and bear its rank, then the ruled soon begin to question and resist that authority, of which they no longer feel either the weight or the benefit.

The struggle may grow *imperceptibly* at first; and *may*—nay, probably *will*—go on silently for years; perhaps for many generations. But in the end it comes to pass that some unforeseen event exhibits strongly the growing weakness of the rulers, and the growing strength of the ruled: then the struggle breaks into life; the opposing classes

clash, and, if neither will yield, the *necessary consequence* is a revolution.

That this was the process of growth of that convulsion which we call the Great Civil War, will be seen, if we cast a brief retrospective glance over the antecedent history of this country. Its earlier periods exhibit a continual struggle between the Crown and the great Barons for a fair distribution of power between them. In these struggles the people were at first neither consulted nor concerned. They were despised bondsmen; and the lowness of their condition, and the contempt in which they were held, rendered it a matter of very trifling import, even to themselves, who were their tyrants.

But by degrees the people found a source of strength in the contests of their superiors; for, as the tide of success flowed backwards and forwards between the Crown and the nobles, according to the force of character of the Sovereign who happened to be on the

throne, each party began to back its pretensions with the assistance, and still more with the name, of the people and of freedom: nobles and kings alternately made use of the despised commons to overwhelm each other, until the latter began to feel that in themselves was the power to turn the balance. Then they began to demand from each of the belligerents in turn, the price of their assistance; and, thus arose charters and franchises and liberties, granted to towns and bodies of men: each of which became a cause of material advancement; each of which became, at some later period, a barrier against the encroachments of tyranny; until, at length, the Crown and the nobility discovered that each, in its desire to depress the other, had raised up an ally, whose power threatened destruction to itself.

The early wars following the Conquest, and the later wars of York and Lancaster, sanguinary and desolating as they were in their immediate effects, are therefore justly

regarded by Sir James Mackintosh, and by some other writers, as having laid the foundation of English liberty. The frequent interruptions of the legitimate line of descent, and the reigns of usurpers, begot early in the people a certain freedom from the doctrines of *divine right* and *pure legitimacy*; and, planted in their hearts, as well as in English law, the more rational doctrine of obedience to the King *de facto*.

And while this frequent deposition of kings and destruction of nobles, tended to weaken the respect of the people for *mere authority* unsupported by *substantial force*, the appeals made, not only to the Parliament, but sometimes even to the people themselves, in the rudest forms of democracy; the unbounded power of moulding the constitution assumed by some of the early parliaments, and the bold language of their decrees, all taught the people that they had rights, and power to enforce them.

At the same time the early creation of

the House of Commons, which led to the gradual intermingling of the lesser nobility with the better classes of the people, laid the foundation of that middle class, or gentry, which has played so distinguished a part in our more modern history, and added *substantial strength* to the ranks of the people, while other causes had combined to give them a disposition to maintain and use it.

Thus the third estate grew up, profiting by the dissensions of its masters: now under one dynasty, now under its rival; but at every change, buying or wringing from its rulers *some new rights and charters*, which, though broken as often as granted, remained still on record, monuments and landmarks to appeal to whenever the people should have full power to enforce them.

It was towards the close of the sixteenth century that trade began sensibly to flourish, and the merchant classes to assume some weight from their wealth.

The reformation in religion had tended

also to increase the power of the people, and to weaken that of the throne. Brought about in England prematurely, suddenly, and violently, by the energetic will of the King, unquestionably for the sole purpose of gratifying his own lawless passions, it struck in reality a deep blow at regal power, in destroying Catholicism. For it cannot be doubted that the spirit of the Catholic religion is more favourable than that of the Protestant to an habitual reverence for authority: its influence over the feelings and passions, the splendour of its rites, the mixture of *charlatanisme* and refinement which pervades all its ceremonies and ordinances; above all, its doctrines of confession and absolution, make it, perhaps, of all systems of worship, that which is most fitted for the State religion in a semi-civilised age, when passions abound, and cool deliberate intellect is to be found in but a small proportion of the population.

To the destruction of the Catholic worship

may be traced the origin of the famous Puritans: a sect no doubt as unboundedly enthusiastic as were ever Catholics or Mohammedans; but whose fervour for the King of Heaven, led them very soon to have little respect for the kings of the earth.

Thus, early in the seventeenth century, was the zeal of religious animosity added to that bias which was silently growing in the breasts of the people against uncontrolled authority in the Prince.

The puritanic sect, it is well-known, had originally sprung up in Scotland at the decline of Catholicism; thence its spirit spread toward the south, and, after the Reformation it took deep root in England. The existence of this gloomy and fanatical sect seems, indeed, to have been the almost natural consequence of the sudden and premature destruction of the Catholic religion, and especially of Monachism.

The minds of men, revolting from the corruptions of the Catholic clergy, had natu-

rally, after the Reformation, run into an opposite extreme ; and the English and Scotch, not content with purifying the faith of their fathers, stripped it of all that appeals to the imagination.

Thus, all that can gratify the eye or the ear was banished from the national religion ; and the people made for themselves a worship so pure, so simple, so reasonable, and so cold, that, though it might be well fitted for the temperate minds of men possessing more intellect than passion, it could not, in an age still rude, and emerging from a passionate conflict, find a welcome among the mass ; accordingly, the *people*, mixing political passion with religious enthusiasm, soon altered it.

Certainly, the oppressions of the Catholic clergy had been great ; and the policy of Henry, and of his Protestant successors, as well as the temper of the people, and the mutual interchange of cruelties between Catholics and Protestants, had made papistry an object

both of hatred and dread. But though the power of the Catholic Church was broken, the passions of men were not altered: the current of fanaticism was changed, but fanaticism itself was not destroyed; for, however the forms of religion may be altered, there are always to be found in the world men of strong passions and fierce temperaments; men of ardent and gloomy imaginations and moderate intellect, to whom exaggeration is the very spirit of life, and who cannot exist without something to hate and revile.

For all the varieties of such men, the Catholic Church was indeed a mother church. For the imaginative, there were the pomp and circumstance of her splendid ritual, the gorgeous array of her processions, the richness and solemnity of her buildings. For the gloomy and unsocial, there was the cell of the monk and the hermit, with all its accompanying penances and self-abasements; while, for the fierce and implacable, there

was the never-failing resource of hating and persecuting Jews, infidels, and heretics.

Catholicism was, in fact, the religion of the heart and of the passions. The reformed religion, on the contrary, was the religion of the intellect: it was more pure, but, at the same time, much more barren; and the people, then still more passionate than intellectual, having swept away all that could dazzle the eye and stir the feelings—all, in fact, that made the Catholic religion *a passion*—had nothing left but to make a passion of the *very barrenness* of their new faith. They did so, and thus it came to pass that the men who, in the earlier ages of christendom, would have been monks and hermits, crusaders, and persecutors of heretics, became Puritans in the seventeenth century.

They simply *exaggerated their new faith as they had before their old one*, and sought, in the heated, though gloomy, imaginings of puritanism—in the *hatred* of all profane amusements and in the persecution of Catholics

that excitement, that gratification of an enthusiastic or passionate disposition, which would before have found food in the pomp of the Catholic ritual or the persecution of heretics. The truth is, that the reformation of religion preceded the reformation of men's minds; and the mass of the people were then still too gross for the simplicity and purity of the new faith.*

Thus far the *source* of puritanical fanaticism may be traced to natural causes; and were it not that the political effects of the Catholic and Protestant creeds are very different, it would have mattered little to the successors of Henry VIII. which way the current of bigotry flowed.

But every one knows that religion and government, in most countries and at most periods, act and re-act upon each other; and in none have they done so more than they

* I shall, of course, not be understood as undervaluing the ultimate results of the Reformation. I am only describing its effects upon society at the time when it took place.

did in England after the Reformation. The change, therefore, from Catholicism to the Reformed Religion had an immense influence on the political disposition of the people; for while passive obedience and subjection of mind to sacerdotal authority are the very essence and spirit of Catholicism, self-guidance and self-reliance are, on the contrary, the chief feature of the Reformed Religion: hence, while the former *disposed* men to an habitual reverence for authority, and supported the influence of royalty over their minds, the latter *leaned* rather towards republicanism; and, by its perpetual communing with God, seemed to lift its votaries from the earth, and taught them to look upon kings rather as fellow-worms than as God's vicegerents upon earth.

Elizabeth seems to have been well aware of this; and though she was induced, both from education and interest, to adopt the Reformed Religion—which the people, having once embraced, would not give up—she

endeavoured to restrain the advance of puritanic fanaticism. The sway of Elizabeth was perhaps more really despotic than had been that of most of her predecessors ; but, though her character was imperious, and her will arbitrary, her measures were usually wise and beneficial to the people. She sometimes, no doubt, strained the prerogative to a high point ; but still her tyranny was the tyranny of a great mind, and, though the prerogative was on her lips, the real power that chained men to her will was the force of her character. Moreover, she had the advantage of following reigns of reckless tyranny and persecution ; and the stern but steady sway with which she held the sceptre was to her subjects so great a change for the better, that they did not inquire what rights they had lost.

The power and credit of the nobility were still great under Elizabeth ; but it was no longer an independent or unbalanced power, as it had been in the days when the nobles

were a perpetual mail-clad army. The prestige of their influence remained, not much shaken, and their landed possessions still gave them power: but lands were also getting into the hands of the gentry who stood between the people and the nobility, and mercantile wealth was silently beginning to diffuse itself among the people. Thus, while the splendour and *éclat* of Elizabeth's court, gave to the throne and the nobility an appearance of greater power and credit than they really possessed, the people were, on the other hand, in possession of a substantial power, greater in reality than in appearance, and greater even than they themselves were yet conscious of. And when the master spirit that had infused this glow of life into the ruling classes had departed, they were left weak, yet believing themselves strong.

Such was the state of things when James I. ascended the throne. History shows us that his mind was filled with the most exalted

notions of regal authority: he would be nothing less than the "absolute King," and wrote learnedly on the divine mission of God's representative on earth. But he possessed neither head nor heart to exert the despotism that he affected; so that his magnificent pretensions, which were not followed by deeds, tended only to weaken the prestige of the prerogative, and to increase the moral strength of the Commons.

His son inherited the father's high strained ideas of the absolute rights of kings, but not his father's softness of disposition; hence he acted upon those doctrines that his father had been content to parade. To the vast change that time had wrought in the organisation of the State he was blind. Circumstances had nearly reversed the positions of the Crown and the people; for while in the feudal ages, the Crown was totally independent of the people in respect to property, and was only kept in check, while at the same time it was defended, by a

powerful, armed nobility ; now, the nature, value, and distribution of property had so changed, that the independent revenues of the Crown were quite inadequate to meet the expenses of Government. The feudal army had disappeared, and the King had no mercenary army to supply its place. The support which the Catholic hierarchy had been to the interests of the Prince, was ill replaced by that of the reformed Established Church : for the former had great influence over the people, and used it in support of itself and of the throne ; while the latter had little influence with the people ; and the Puritan clergy, who were rapidly acquiring it, were with the people and against the Sovereign. There remained, therefore, to the King, to aid him in resisting all changes in the extent of his authority, little but the prestige of his prerogative ; which was a shadow.

The English revolution was produced, therefore, not by the mere despotism of Charles, as some believe, or pretend to believe, or

by the mere fanaticism of the zealots, as others would have it; but by the effect of real changes that time had wrought in the construction of the political body, and which had transferred the substantial power to the hands of those who had no conventional authority.

A change amounting, *de facto*, to a revolution, had become, in truth, inevitable, from causes over which Charles had no control. Had he been a wise Prince, he might have led the revolution, and, perhaps, have effected it without bloodshed. His want of policy and wisdom accelerated or determined the time of the popular outbreak; but the revolution was the work of time and circumstances, not that of either Charles or of the Puritans.

Still it was the total unfitness of the King for such a position as that to which he was called, which was the *immediate* cause of the war and of the temporary destruction of monarchy.

A rapid review of his policy, or rather of his impolicy, will I think show that it is idle to attribute the fall of the King either to the Puritans as a body, or to Cromwell individually. The King's own acts destroyed the King; and, if Cromwell had not led the revolution, some one else must have done so.

The intellect of Charles was rather refined than grand or powerful; and his obstinate perseverance in an attempt to preserve for the Crown a preponderance and prerogative, which he had no substantial means of enforcing, was, unquestionably, the *proximate* cause of the contest assuming the immediate form of a desolating Civil War.

The unfortunate bigotry of James I. to the doctrines of high prerogative, and his belief that the entire power of the State belonged, of right, to the Sovereign, had been, as I have observed, instilled most completely into the mind of his successor. These assumptions, though offensive to the

feelings of the Commons, had produced no immediate outbreak under James' rule, because they were rather a part of his *theory* of government, than a feature in the actual exercise of his authority.

But while James, contenting himself with declamations, and with startling claims to unlimited power, was led by the natural weakness of his character to be far from absolute in his actions, as bearing on the nation at large; and contented himself with a few disgusting acts of tyranny, bearing chiefly on the nobles; Charles, on the other hand, with less show of despotic intentions in the beginning, was soon led by the circumstances of the times, and by his own character, to attempt practically enforcing those doctrines of absolute authority in the Prince, and passive obedience in the subject, which he unfortunately derived both by inheritance and education.

The disputes between James and his parliaments, the occasion of so many strong

expressions and weak acts from that learned Prince, had served to give the Commons a knowledge of their strength, and with it the ambition of extending, or at least establishing, their power; and while they bore the high pretensions of the King with tolerable humour, and, occasionally, even yielded to him in the matter of subsidies, they arose from each struggle with increased strength, and increased ambition.

The real power of the Crown had, in the mean time, dwindled to a shadow; and Charles, filled with the highest notions of the regal authority, had received from his father a gilded, but a hollow, sceptre, more powerful in name, and weaker in effect, than it had been at any former period of our history. His power was, indeed, *vox, et præterea nihil!*

It was one of the greatest misfortunes of Charles I., and, perhaps, the source of all the evil that afterwards befel him, that he thus came to the throne with false views of

his own position, and that of the nation. His character was originally honourable, and his intentions towards his people the very reverse of wicked; and, had he lived a century or two earlier, he might have reigned an honoured and beloved Sovereign.*

Taught to believe that the power of kings was "from above" in the strongest and widest sense of the term, and, believing also that this was really the opinion of the better part of the nation, he met his first

* As it has been a fashion with one set of writers perpetually to stigmatise Cromwell as a hypocrite, so it has been equally the fashion with another to call Charles an "unprincipled tyrant:" both charges are false. Cromwell, in the beginning of his career, was not a hypocrite; and the King was not an unprincipled tyrant. He was disposed to arbitrary government, *on principle*; he considered authority as concentrated by the Constitution in his person. His principle might be—nay, was, as I believe—wrong; but it was a *principle*: and the revolution arose, not from any systematic intention on the part of Charles to subvert what he thought the Constitution, but because he was ignorant of the nature and foundation of political rights. His intellect was cultivated, but narrow: he was bound by precedents of preceding centuries, and sought to govern the rich and powerful commonalty of the seventeenth century by the rules of feudal ages: he did wrong, but not intentionally. See on this, Hume, vi., 269 and 270, as to the King's extravagant but conscientious notions of the paramount nature of the kingly authority.

Parliament, in the beginning of his reign, with cordiality and sincerity. Expecting from it nothing but duty and kindness, he did not imagine that there *could* be any serious opposition to his wishes or his authority; and he took, therefore, no politic measures to insure success in his requests, but seemed to trust entirely to that affection which he deemed it the duty of his subjects to offer, and of which he blindly believed himself possessed.

The King had yet done nothing to forfeit, personally, the affections of his subjects; and he, not unnaturally, expected generous and conciliatory conduct from them, in answer to the frankness and cordiality of his own. He came to the throne engaged in an expensive war against Austria and Spain, into which James had been urged, more by the importunities of the Commons than by his own wishes. The revenues of the Crown were already exhausted and anticipated in the public service: the King was himself in debt to the amount of £70,000, spent

on naval and military armaments, and loaded with a debt of £300,000, contracted by his father for the prosecution of the war. Such was the state of Charles' wants; and it must have been with no small astonishment that he found the Commons voting him two subsidies amounting to £112,000.

A supply so inadequate appears, indeed, in the language of Mr. Hume, "rather a cruel mockery of Charles than any serious design of supporting him." The motives that thus brought the numerous members of the Commons together on one point, were doubtless very various, springing from their passions, their prejudices, and their interests. But it is evident that the chief motive of the leaders was one of policy, viz., the desire of establishing, by the refusal of supplies, some sort of check on the regal power.

The great difference of character between James and Charles must have been well-known to the chief members of the House; "men," says even Hume, "of the most

uncommon capacity and the largest views." Indeed, the haughtiness of the King's language and bearing, while yet Prince of Wales, had given promise of what would be his pretensions to absolutism when once seated on the throne.

Thus, although the Commons might have been well disposed to pass by unnoticed the loud but innocuous pretensions to arbitrary authority of the literary James, yet they reasonably dreaded to see the same doctrines and pretensions admitted and organised under the rule of such a prince as Charles; who believed as firmly as his father in his own high privileges, and was both bold and self-willed enough to act upon them.

The limits of the kingly power were at that time so little defined by either law or usage, that, although charters almost innumerable had established liberty by law, yet every succeeding sovereign had repeatedly violated them, and exerted, occasionally without challenge, acts of the most despotic and

irresponsible authority. But these things happened in times of civil wars and struggles, when "every man's hand was against his brother;" when war was the business of the subject as well as the Prince, and violence was too common to be noted; and when, therefore, it frequently happened that nothing but the exercise of a temporary dictatorship could prevent the reign of anarchy and destruction.

Such infringements of liberty became, as it were, precedents in favour of an unlimited prerogative; but it is evident that they were exceptions rather than rules: the charters remained, although necessity had sometimes compelled the nation to see them broken; and the right to liberty was rather suspended than abolished.

To have permitted, therefore, the Sovereign, after a century of regular and undisturbed government, to arm himself with a code of prerogative precedents derived from more rude and stormy ages, and to govern as

if the sole right to power were in the Crown, would have been to yield up at once both the substance and the shadow of liberty, and to bow down to a regular, methodised, and, perhaps, irrevocable, despotism.

The doctrines of prerogative had been sounded highly from the throne in the last reign, but its actual power and exercise had been in abeyance; and it seems to have been the determination of the Commons not to wait for any overt demonstration on the part of the Prince, but at once to make a stand against its revival in any future reign, by an early assertion of their own privilege of refusing or curtailing supplies. The want of a clear boundary between the privileges of the Crown and the rights of the people, was becoming daily more and more felt, and the Commons were resolved upon marking it.

Such feelings were doubtless in the hearts of the Parliamentary leaders; and, though

they, perhaps, in this instance, led the Parliament to act too abruptly towards a young Prince, these feelings were in themselves just and politic. But to the mind of Charles, cradled and tutored as he had been, they could, and did, appear little short of downright rebellion; and after a few months of remonstrances and recriminations, he put an end, as is well known, to his first Parliament—too short in its duration for the transaction of any business, but long enough to engender hostility between the King and his people.

He then had recourse to issuing privy seals for *borrowing* money from his subjects: in other words, for compelling payment of a subsidy; and, by this means, he raised a sufficient sum to equip a fleet of eighty ships, and an army of ten thousand men. These were sent against Cadiz, under the command of Sir Edward Cecil; but, failing in their enterprise, were obliged to return to England without having done anything.

The King was, by this ill-success, again obliged to have recourse to a Parliament, and endeavoured to rid himself of the opposition which he feared, by naming four of the popular leaders sheriffs of counties; expecting thus to incapacitate them from being elected members. But, in now attempting to use politic artifice, he was as unfortunate as he had been in his first Parliament, from totally neglecting it; for the design was too transparent not to be seen through, and served only to irritate the Commons, while it exhibited the fear and weakness of the Court.

This second Parliament is well known to have been little more accommodating to Charles than had been the previous one. They replied to his request for supplies by grants very inadequate to the necessities of the Government: and, in order to retain a powerful check upon the King, they only *voted* supplies; reserving the passing of them into law until the end of the session. In the meantime they proceeded to inquire into

grievances; and their first attack was on the King's favourite minister.

The Duke of Buckingham—whose fatal sway over James had enabled him to break off the long negotiated match between Charles and the Infanta of Spain, and to embroil the nation in the Spanish War, solely for the gratification of his own animosities—had maintained an influence no less strong over Charles.

Almost from the beginning of his career of power, the Duke had made himself odious to the people: rash, impetuous, and insolent; thirsting for power, without discretion or capacity to use it when obtained; violent in his counsels, and nerveless in his acts; ostentatiously dissolute, at a period when austerity was the popular idol; he insulted the people by his luxurious manners, and the Commons by affecting a haughty dictation over them; while, by his incapable and impolitic conduct, he was perpetually wasting the resources, and sapping the power of his Sovereign. Certainly, when we reflect on

his character, we must feel convinced that, however brilliant as a courtier, or agreeable as a companion, he was the very last man who would have been chosen by a politic Prince to be a favourite and counsellor at such a juncture.

The Commons, profiting by his unpopularity, determined to attack him by a Parliamentary impeachment, and accordingly betook themselves to frame articles of accusation, some of which were frivolous, and the remainder false; while his conduct in fomenting the Spanish War, which was really a public offence of magnitude, was not noticed.

The impeachment was not brought to a close: a thing not much to be wondered at; since the misdeeds of favourites, however unjust and odious to the people, rarely reach the height of crimes that can be brought under any known and received law; and as favourites are more frequently accused from envy and hatred, than from the mere desire of justice, so the proceedings

are generally marked more by passion than by judgment; and trifles, as in this case, are exaggerated beyond the interpretation they can bear, while real offences are passed by unnoticed.

But the impeachment of the King's favourite minister, although unsuccessful, was a deep affront to him; and he, in his turn, resented it, by embracing every opportunity of evincing contempt and disgust for his Parliament. He desired them to leave off meddling with his minister, and to betake themselves to their business of supplies; and was even so imprudent as to threaten them in a message, that if they did not furnish him with supplies, he should be obliged to try *new channels*: thus pointing at the means he afterwards took to obtain money in defiance of Parliaments. Then followed the altercations relating to the imprisonment, by Charles, of two members who had been managers of the impeachment; and out of this altercation the Commons again emerged victors.

Irritated by all these altercations, and baffled

in their attack upon the minister, the Commons proceeded to raise other subjects of complaint, and claimed the execution of the laws against Catholics; the rigour of which Charles had constantly evinced a disposition to abate.

It is difficult, at this day, to say whether he was prompted to such a course by natural feelings of toleration, or by a secret association in his own mind of the tenets of Catholicism with those of absolute monarchy, and a desire to check the power of the Puritans; whose doctrines leaned strongly towards the disrespect of kingly authority. But, whatever were his motives in supporting the Catholics, his policy was clearly unwise in thus attacking the most deeply-rooted prejudices of his subjects, and arraying against himself the immense moral force of religious hostility.

Next came the remonstrance against the levying of tonnage and poundage without consent of Parliament; and, as this formed a large portion of the royal resources, it wanted very little penetration to perceive

that the Commons, by this measure, were aiming a fatal blow at the independence of the Crown.

Charles, therefore, resolved to make a stand against what he considered an attempt to deprive him of his birthright, and hastily, it will be recollected, ended the session by a dissolution. But the Commons had foreseen this, and took care to finish their remonstrance and disperse it among the people, as a justification of their conduct. The King answered by a counter-proclamation, giving his reasons for putting so sudden a stop to the operations of Parliament; forgetful that, in stooping his high pretensions to justify himself before his people, he was himself insulting the majesty of kings, and teaching the multitude to become his judge. From this moment may be dated the commencement of the revolution.

Two Parliaments had been called and dismissed in anger; and it was obvious that the King could not govern *with* Parliaments, and that the nation would not be governed

without them. The differences between Charles and the Commons had assumed each session a more angry character, and now at length broke forth into actual altercation. Acrimous complaints on the one side, and insulting rebukes on the other, had enlisted too many angry feelings on both sides for conciliatory measures to have henceforth much chance of success ; and, to a calm looker on, it must have been evident that war was begun.

Disappointed a second time of Parliamentary supplies, Charles now had recourse to his prerogative : he granted a commission to compound with the Catholics for dispensing with the penal laws against them, by which he filled his coffers with gold, and the hearts of his Protestant subjects with hatred.*

* In all this the King was true to his characteristic fault of always being too late. Had he enforced his prerogative at the very commencement, before the weakness of the Crown and the strength of the Commons had become too apparent, possibly he might have crushed opposition and reigned despotic. He waited to strike a blow till his adversary had learned his own strength, and then he struck it when it was too late.

He now, also, for the first time, levied the celebrated ship-money, in order to equip a fleet; commanding all the maritime towns, by an order in council, to furnish each a certain number of armed ships. And then came the *general loan*—enforced under an order in Council—and by which the very sum was required which the people would have paid, had the four subsidies (voted, but not finally granted, by the previous Parliament) passed into a law.

This was at once, on the King's part, throwing down the gauntlet; since it amounted to exacting by the King's *sole authority*, the very supplies which the Commons had refused. The most despotic and inquisitorial regulations were attempted to enforce the payment of this loan. The Commissioners appointed to levy it were empowered to put men upon oath whether they had been persuaded to refuse, and to *charge*—that is, to accuse—such as had persuaded them. The Court clergy were encouraged to preach to the people the doctrine of passive obedience

in support of the loan; many men were thrown into prison, by warrant of the Council, for refusing, and advising others to refuse, payment. In fine, that battle was really commenced between the prerogative and liberty which was to end in the destruction of the throne, and the temporary suspension of liberty itself.

Had Charles possessed at this time a disciplined and devoted army, he might, perhaps, have succeeded in establishing the authority of the prerogative; at least for a time. That he conscientiously believed himself entitled by his high regal state to such exertions of power there is little reason to doubt; but here it was the misfortune of this Prince, as in almost every other act of his life, to mistake his own belief for fact, and to attempt strong measures without any force to support them: forgetful that if all power "is from above," it is so only when it *is* power.

That the general loan was a *substantial* *infraction of liberty*, is perfectly obvious; for

the refusal of supplies was the only efficient barrier that the Commons could oppose to the will of the Prince. But it is not so easy to show that it was a *formal infraction of the Constitution*.

Forced loans were authorised by precedent, and even by statutes: if any precedent, or any statute, could bind the nation to submit to arbitrary authority when not suited to the times. Henry VIII. had once practised this mode of levying money: he issued commissions of his sole authority for taxing particular bodies; he had taken the money granted by Parliament before the time prescribed; he had levied tonnage and poundage without, though not against, the consent of Parliament.* Mary had also levied impositions of her sole authority, and seized corn to victual her ships, without paying for it.† And Elizabeth had raised ship-money and tonnage and poundage. In fact, the precedents to be drawn from the reign of Eliza-

* REEVES' "History of English Law," iv. 401, 402.

† Ibid, 558.

both were almost all in favour of despotic authority.

Moreover the limits of the Constitution were very vague: there is scarce any amount of reasonable liberty that is not held out by the Great Charter, and the statutes confirming it. There is, on the other hand, scarce any amount of despotism that was not *formally* exercised under the prerogative which then *legally* subsisted.* And there is, finally, scarce any real stretch of despotic power for which an example might not have been pleaded in the conduct of one or other of the Sovereigns of England.

But there are periods in the history of nations, when the elements that compose the State have undergone changes, and require a new arrangement. Such was the period at which it was the misfortune of Charles to come to the throne, with a mind unfitted, both by nature and education, to cope with the chaos that threatened him.

* On the extent of the prerogative exercised without question under Elizabeth, see REEVES, vol. iv. 228—233.

He saw not that the prerogative had gradually become odious, and its full exercise impracticable; he saw not that growth of the middle classes, which demanded rather a relaxation than an increase of the royal authority, and which at any rate could not be checked except by force. And thus, after exasperating the minds of men by many impolitic affronts to their prejudices, he at length attacked their dearest right, the control of their money; without anything to support his attempt but the name of a prerogative whose prestige had passed away, and an appeal to precedents whose authority was disputed by most men.

At this time, when one would have supposed that the inquietudes of the King at home, and the war with Spain, would have been sufficient employment for the most restless and ambitious spirit, he suddenly plunged into a war with France, in support of the Huguenots; then exposed to the attacks of the ambitious Richelieu. The passions of Buckingham, the source of so many fatal

events, are said to have been the chief cause of this war. He had ventured, while negotiating at the French Court the King's marriage with Henrietta, to address his homage—and it is said not unsuccessfully—to the Queen herself: he thus incurred the enmity of Richelieu, who was himself guilty of similar presumption; and the minister having discovered the correspondence, on Buckingham's departure, took care that his youthful rival should not again cross him in the path of gallantry.

Accordingly, "when the Duke," says Mr. Hume, "was making preparations for a new embassy to Paris, a message was sent him from Louis, that he must not think of such a journey. In a romantic passion he swore that he would see the Queen in spite of all the power of France; and from that moment he determined on engaging England in a war with that kingdom."

Now, is it wonderful that a Sovereign who gave his confidence to such counsellors, should live to see his sceptre broken?

Buckingham, it is well known, succeeded in embroiling the two nations, and was entrusted with a fleet of one hundred sail and an army of seven thousand men, with which he attacked Rochelle. But, however superior to Richelieu in the contest of gallantry, he was totally unfit to cope with him in the sterner game of war and politics; and, after drawing his Sovereign into a struggle, he contrived by a series of military blunders to fail miserably, and returned to England with about a third of his army; the only fruits which he reaped from his selfish enterprise, being an increased claim on the hatred and contempt of his country.

The people were now much exasperated: the war had already injured their trade; and supplies were extorted from them by means which they felt to be illegal in spirit, and arbitrary in execution. They had not even honour abroad to console them for tyranny at home; but instead, they saw their fleets and their armies wasted and disgraced by the ill-concerted measures of a favourite,

gifted with scarce one quality to merit the respect of a people, or the confidence of a King.

It may well be thought that such was not a propitious moment to call a Parliament; but the King had exhausted his treasury, and the reluctance with which money had been yielded by the people to his various expedients, made it dangerous to attempt them again in the present temper of the nation. In this dilemma he summoned his third Parliament.

The construction of this House was not such as to give Charles much hope of obtaining over it any advantages that he had failed in extorting from his previous Parliaments. The majority of the members were men deeply imbued with the growing spirit of liberty, and possessed of great wealth. The leaders were men of great ability and prudence, and fully determined to make head against the pretensions of the King; and they had with them the confidence of the people, who had now begun to look upon

the Parliament as the sole bulwark between their liberties and the encroachments of despotic authority.

The King, in his first address to this assembly, exhibited a haughty and ill-timed tone of rebuke, and threw down the gauntlet at the very onset, by an insulting caution to the Commons; the only effect of which was, to embitter their feelings, already more than sufficiently acrimonious, and to make them more wary, but not less determined in the execution of their plans.

The King, doubtless, thought himself aggrieved by the conduct of his Parliaments, and believed in his conscience that to him was entrusted, by God and by the laws, the care of the preservation and prosperity of the people; but the Commons did not share in this belief, and it was precisely from the thralldom of this species of paternal government that they sought to free themselves: and hence Parliament, which in preceding reigns had assumed very little authority in respect to supplies, beyond that of

deciding whether the people were able to supply the demands of the Sovereign, began in this reign to make their right of granting and withholding supplies, an indirect method of controlling the actions of the Prince in other particulars.

The new Parliament proceeded, therefore, resolutely, in spite of the King's admonition, to attack the grievances to which the nation had been exposed since the dissolution of the preceding Parliament, and to erect such barriers as the Prince should not in future overstep.

The result of their labours was the famous Petition of Right, the object of which was to define clearly the limits of the prerogative. The House of Peers endeavoured first to soften and render it less specific in its declarations; but the Commons would not listen to any modification.

The King endeavoured also, by many evasive messages, to put off giving his sanction; but the Commons and Lords, having passed the bill, he at length gave the Royal assent

in the proper form ; having, as usual, resisted just long enough to irritate the Commons, and to convince them that he passed their bill, not from any gracious spirit of conciliation, but because he could not avoid it.

Shortly before the summoning of this Parliament, commissioners had been appointed to concert methods of levying money by impositions or otherwise ; “ *where form and circumstance,*” said the commission, “ *must be dispensed with, rather than the substance lost :*” an assumption of authority somewhat startling, which seemed to set all law at defiance, and amounted to making the Sovereign the sole arbiter, not only of the imposts that were to be levied, but of the *manner* of levying them.*

* It is worthy of remark that the King's most blameable acts were odious, not so much from their actual pressure on the people, as from the dread of the doctrines and consequences that might be derived from them ; and, while he thus assumed the power to take the money and imprison the persons of his subjects on his sole authority, the supplies which he really took were exceedingly small. Herein he exhibited strongly the want of policy which ended by dethroning him ; for he irritated the people, and yet left them the means of resistance. He should have taken no money against law, or he should have drained the nation till it was powerless.

Money had likewise been remitted to the Continent to raise a thousand German horse and bring them to England; to enforce, as was supposed, the levying of the impositions.

These violent measures were attributed mainly to the counsels of the Duke of Buckingham, whom the Commons now again made an effort to displace, by drawing up a remonstrance to the King, in which all the misfortunes and evil acts of his administration were very severely censured, and laid to the charge of his minister. But the King, to prevent the finishing and presenting of this remonstrance, came suddenly to Parliament and ended the session by a prorogation.

The grand dispute about tonnage and poundage remained yet unsettled in the second session of this famous Parliament: the House contending eagerly for retaining in their hands the *absolute right* of granting or withholding it; the King, on his side, endeavouring to evade their pretensions, and, though not actually claiming a right to levy it *without consent* of Parliament, yet

affecting to consider the granting of it as a duty that he was, *of right*, entitled to *demand* at their hands: a subtle distinction not easily apprehended by plain men, who would be apt to think that, if the King had a *right to demand* that the Commons should *give* him a supply, it amounted to the same in effect, as that the King should have a right to *take* a supply.

Yet, subtle though the distinction be, Charles was not wholly without grounds for making it. The Parliament had, in ancient times, been in the habit of making temporary grants of this impost; but it had also happened, that the Sovereign took it as a matter of course, without going to Parliament for it, and that afterwards the Commons voted him what he had already taken: so that, if the question were to be judged by precedents, there might have been precedents cited on either side.

But, in discussing the relative merits of both parties in the preliminary struggle that ushered in the Civil War, it is ridiculous

to be perpetually appealing to precedents. The fact is, that few of the acts, either of the King or of the popular party, were *formally* illegal or unconstitutional, although many of the acts of the Commons were harsh and bitter, and the greater part of the King's were clearly destructive of that spirit of freedom which formed no inconsiderable ingredient in the Constitution, and certainly formed the basis of the popular character.

But, as it is the very essence of the English Constitution that the different bodies which constitute it possess separate and counteracting powers, so it follows that, whenever the three bodies exert their full power, the Government must come to a dead stop.* Hence the full exercise of the prerogative was, in the days of Charlès—as it is, even now—perfectly incompatible with the full and practical exercise of the privileges of Parliament.

* In other words, they never can all and each exert their full power, but one always gives way. The equal exertion of the force of the three powers of the Constitution, is like the crossing of bayonets in a charge of troops: it exists in books, but no where else.

Such was the case in the question of tonnage and poundage. Many of the predecessors of Charles had taken this duty, not only without resistance, but as a customary tribute. So far, therefore, he had, by the authority of precedents (and precedents are the foundation of the prerogative which was sanctioned by law), a *right to demand* it from Parliament, if not actually to *take* it.

On the other hand, the *practical exercise* of such a right, in *defiance* of the opposite will of Parliament, would make that assembly nugatory, and was clearly hostile to the spirit of the charters. It was a clear privilege of Parliament to withhold all supplies which they might grant.

Thus there were two admitted rights, co-existent, and exactly destructive of each other. Which was to prevail ?

If men are to judge in such questions only by admitted precedents and written rules, it is obvious that no decision could be attained ; but in truth, in this as in almost all other questions as to the *right* that each party had in its

proceedings up to this period of the revolution, the Gordian knot should be cut at once, by scattering from the subject all these cobwebs of legal casuistry, and remembering that, if the law governs the community, the benefit of the community must govern the law. At the period of which we are writing, it was necessary for the existing condition of the nation, to *circumscribe the limits of the prerogative, and make the King less powerful.*

On this principle alone can we hold that the King did wrong, and the Commons right; but, judged by any then established law, they were like most disputants, both right and both wrong. Happy had it been for Charles and the people of his generation, had he understood the eternal principle of all governments, that real power *ought* to be, and *will be*, invested with corresponding authority; then he would have freely yielded up to the growing power of his Commons those privileges which he had no longer power to maintain, and led that revolution which he had not power to check.

But it was not so. Charles sought his rule of conduct in the laws and precedents that had come before him. *They* had not changed, and he believed that the nation had not changed; or, that if it had, it was his duty to resist the change. Hence his opposition to every step that seemed to involve a diminution of the *ancient* privileges of the Crown, or to mark a boundary of its *future* authority. Hence also, perhaps, his dislike to the austere religious sect that had of late grown up; and in which he saw a feeling of popular independence, inconsistent with his maxims of government. With these opinions and these feelings the King resisted inevitable changes; and his own destruction, and the convulsion of his country for ten long years, were the consequence.

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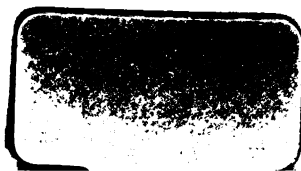
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